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THE BURDEN
OF THE STRONG

JOSEPHINE TURCK BAKER

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The Burden of the Strong

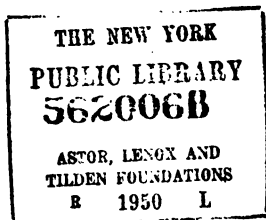
The Burden of the Strong

**By
Josephine Turck Baker**

**EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
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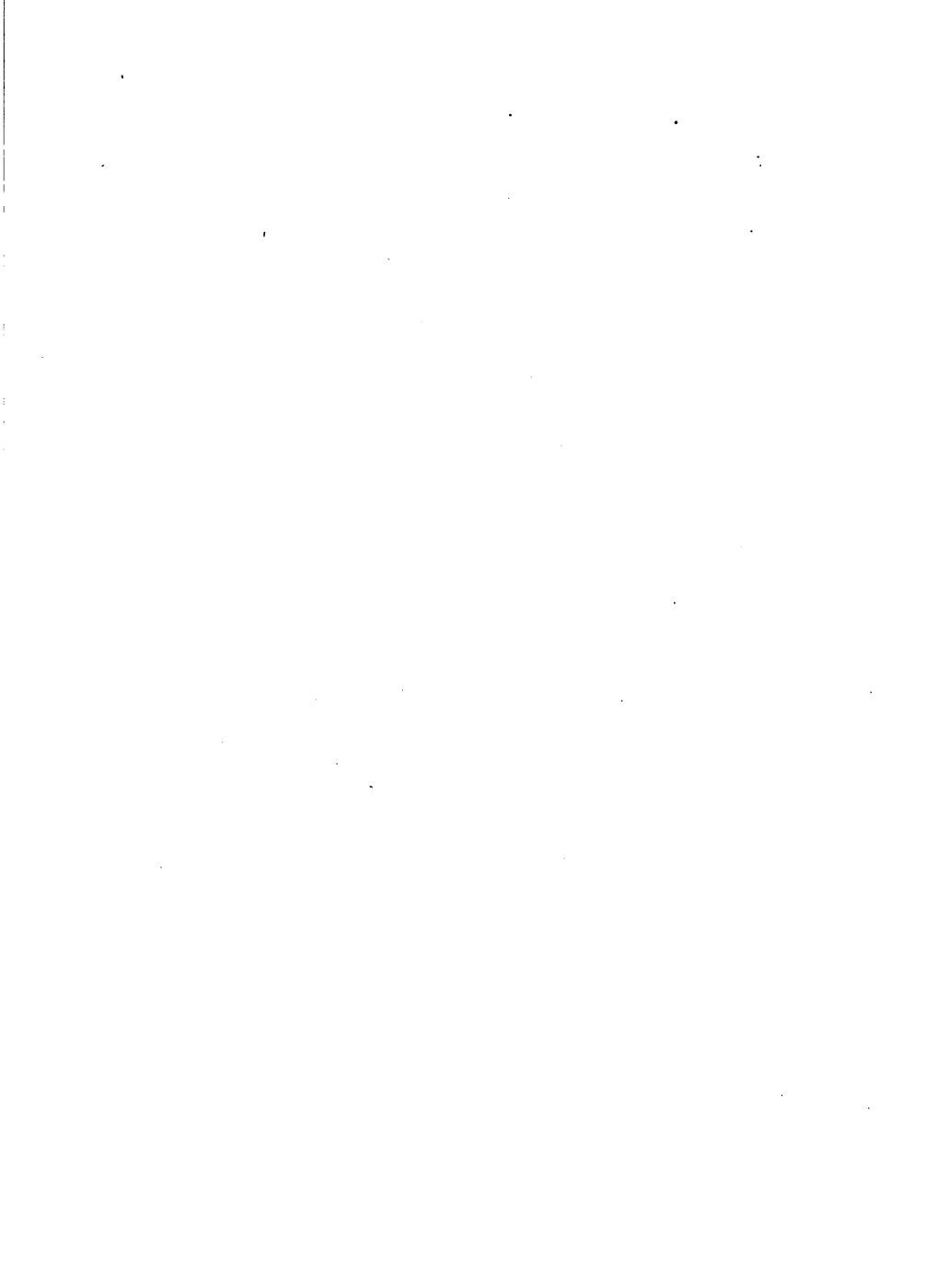
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To
my husband and children



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The Burden of the Strong

CHAPTER I

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN

"You have decided?" The man looked intently at the woman as though his life depended upon her answer.

"Yes!" The tone left no doubt as to the finality of her decision. "I have wasted several of the best years of my life with a man who doesn't love me, and I am not going to perpetuate this condition a day longer."

"And then?"

"Mr. Forsyth!" The woman stepped quickly aside as the man advanced.

"Let me say what I have long wanted to say, but have not dared!"

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"No! You must wait until I am free!"

"You are free now," the man insisted. "Your husband is no longer entitled to your loyalty. Accept the love I offer you, Julia, — the love which is your heritage."

"No! No! I will not listen to you. You have no right to talk to me so."

"I have the right."

"Not yet;" the woman urged.

"Be sensible, Julia." The man seized her arm firmly as she tried to escape him. "You are free. It is love and love only that makes marriage; and when love ceases, marriage no longer exists. Surely, you cannot believe that the mere granting of a divorce can separate you from your husband more than you are now separated."

"Yes;" she demurred; "in a sense. But,— " drawing back as the man fixed his ardent gaze upon her; "wait until I am free legally."

"And then you will listen to me? Julia! You will belong to me? How I shall protect and love and cherish you! Your slightest wish

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shall be mine." His arms were about her; his lips touched her forehead. For a moment she seemingly yielded to his embrace, and then drew away, as if afraid of the love within her grasp.

"Don't torture me, Julia!"

The man standing before her in the full strength of his manhood, his whole being attuned to the one desire of his life,—the possession of this beautiful, spirituelle woman, this ideal personality, whose heart, soul, and mind balanced perfectly, each with the other;—whose nature, too, was vibrant in every chord with the impulses that stirred his life,—the man looked at the woman beside him, this idol, this goddess, whom he had placed so high as to be almost, if not quite beyond his reach,—and demanded her of herself, in the name of the ruler of the universe,—the leveler of all earthly power,—the equalizer of all human endeavor, whose kingdom is in the Everlasting, and whose throne is set above the stars,—the God-Creator of all that is, or has been, or ever

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shall be, — Love, Arch-Ruler of the heavens and of the earth. The man wearing upon his breast the royal badge of his authority, drew the woman to him in loving embrace, and demanded her surrender.

“You are going to belong to me, Julia?” he asked when she no longer resisted.

“When I am free to marry you;” she assented, and then sped up the cliff leading to the Point.

The man turned and sought the bridle path leading to Ocean View, where he had come for the week end. He watched the woman until she had gained the highest cliff, and then walked slowly back to the hotel.

CHAPTER II

“THE RACE IS TO THE SWIFT”

To be loved! to be worshipped! to be adored! and to return that love, that worship, that adoration, measure for measure,—even to overflowing; and supreme of joys,—this rich experience had come to her in the fulness of her ripened womanhood. Julia Hamilton, looking out on the sea from the huge boulder where she sat, turned her glowing face to the western sky, and pagan-like, lifted her arms in imploration, that this great love should make radiant her life, like the sun the earth, with the beauty of its transcendent glory.

She looked out on the ocean below,—big and mighty,—with the power to crush or save, like this love that had come into her life; and

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she dreamed of a day, not far off, when she should set sail for foreign lands,—perhaps never to return, with the man she loved,—had begun to worship with an idolatry akin to that which a heathen feels for his God.

The twilight passed into the deepening night, but still she sat looking out on the wide expanse before her; but no longer seeing, for her vision had become introspective as she summoned up for review the happenings of the past few months, leading up to this culmination of her dreams,—this realization of the desire of her heart, of her soul, of her whole being, for the love that was to tinge, with roseate hue, the dawn of her new-born life.

The stars came out; the moon rose blood red; but with the growing light, she experienced an unpleasant sensation; an elusive feeling, for which she could find no name. Was it a twinge of conscience that she felt? No; conscience is only for insouciant beings, incapable of differentiating that which is, from that which seems. But,—and again the

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twinge made itself more distinctly felt,—it was just such a night that she had sat on this very rock, and had plighted her troth to the man whose name she bore,—had borne for ten years,—long, wasted years, they seemed to her now in the light of this new experience. It all came back with an unpleasant suggestion of something left undone; some sins of omission on her part, at least slightly to offset his many sins of commission. She thought of that other night, too, when she had stood in the House of God, and had sworn to love, honor, and obey, “till death do us part,” the man from whom she was about to separate herself forever; and this, in order that she might accept a love that had become an obsession, and without which, life seemed unbearable,—not possible to be lived.

For a moment, she experienced a disagreeable sensation,—a distrust of her ability to dissociate herself from her present relations, and to pass upon her conduct with the unbiased judgment by which she gaged the rights of others.

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The feeling was but momentary, for she regained almost immediately that faith in her judgment which had marked her as a woman set apart from her class, and capable of rendering an unerring verdict, favorable or unfavorable, even though she herself were the defendant.

"Till death do us part!" What inanity! What did she know of life when she took that vow? As well hold a starving child culpable of stealing fruit in a neighboring orchard, as to hold her responsible for feeding her starved nature with the love within her grasp. "The first duty one owes to society is duty to oneself, who is a part of the whole," she told herself.

No! she should not let these little whispering birds frighten her. She could detach tradition,—handed-down hearsay, from the basic principles on which the social code was founded. All the trouble in the world, she reasoned, resulted from ignorance,—from the blind acceptance of opinion in the place of fact. The great mass of individuals making up the

“THE RACE IS TO THE SWIFT”

totality, were incapable of thinking. Only at rare intervals did a prophet appear, torch in hand, to blaze a path through the darkness for those who were incapable of detaching the great facts of life from empiric beliefs. What is tradition but a huge polypus growth, unable from long clinging to make free the thing to which it clings? As for herself, she was able to break off this accretion. No surgeon's knife was necessary in her case. She was glad she possessed the strength to free herself,—to walk independently. She was glad to follow that path, and in the full belief, too, that it could not lead her steps astray. She was glad, withal, that the illumination had come in her youth,—was she not indeed very young judged by the standard of senility?

A vision of her husband's mother arose,—Madame Hamilton, with bent shoulders, and tottering gait. Had she ever loved,—this crabbed old dame, who had done so much to widen the breach between her son and the woman whom he had promised to love,

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protect, and cherish? Had she ever been loved, worshipped, adored? Impossible! Never, at any rate, as she had been. No; it was not given to many, this wonderful blazing forth of light by which heaven itself had been made visible. She thanked God for this great gift, and for the strength that enabled her to accept it. Only a strong woman could do what she contemplated doing,—break the chains that bound her,—fettters that had become like iron and as heavy. It would be easier to remain chained to her moorings than to set out on an untried sea. But she was strong, and so could sail her boat in safety to another shore. She could already see herself on the other side, sharing her life with the man to whom she was to give herself.

“Weak people are weak,” she reasoned, “because they are without imagination. For the strong, fate reserves her richest gift,—the achievement of that for which one strives, with the added award of a conscience untroubled by cowardly fears,—the pangs of self-recrimina-

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tion and futile attempts at self-justification." There would be no after-regrets for her;—no whimpering at her failure to keep to the beaten path. She had decided, and she should abide by her decision, and be forever grateful for the strength that had made it possible.

A bird flew past her, carrying in its beak a squirming worm. "The race is to the swift! The weak are crushed by the incontrovertible laws of nature," she mused. And yet the subtlety of her reasoning carried her still farther, and she saw that it was to preserve the weak that the mother-bird had destroyed the hapless worm. Was it right that the worm should perish? Was it better? No; it could not be right; it could not be better; it was simply the inevitable law at work,—the law that governs all life. The fittest survive, not because of right, but because of might. Humanity,—all human kind as well as animal, was in its infancy; was it? Was there a higher law, undiscovered as yet? She could reason no further. All that she could sense, meditating

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in her solitude, was that so far as she knew this was the law of life,—the strong shall survive; the weak shall perish.

Yes; but she argued; she could think; could carry a premise to a logical conclusion; why should she be a part of that great mass which was motivated by mere intuitive impulse? Should not her ability to reason elevate her to a higher plane of action? Should the strong crush the weak, or should it bear its burden? This was a problem,—the world's problem,—her problem. No; it was no longer her problem; she had decided. Whether right or wrong, for weal or woe, she should take to herself this love which had come to her. It was the insignia of her strength, she told herself again and again, that she could break the shackles that bound her, and feel free,—*be* free to belong to another,—both in the sight of man and of God.

“Of God!” What did she know of God? she demanded of herself. “I know only what

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my reason tells me,—illuminated by this great love that has come to me. I know that I *am* entitled to as much as the bird in her nest,—my mate. This is my right,—the right possessed by every being born into the world to obey the God-given law of selection.”

A sound reached her ears; it was like the cry of a child. Could it be her child? her little Joseph? She winced, for her husband bore the same name. He and she, bending over the new-born babe, had agreed that their son should be named for his father; and kneeling by that altar of their love, had prayed for strength to guide his steps aright. That had been in their early married life, when they had both held to the time-honored ideas of the sanctity of the home; of their obligations to each other,—to their church,—to their God.

How strange it was! What a miracle! — this getting away from all that had been, and turning to that which neither one had dreamed could ever be. The sound broke in again upon

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her meditation, but this time quite distinguishable, as the voice of a mother-bird calling to her young. A flush mounted to her cheek as she thought of her child and her forgetfulness of him. She was less thoughtful than the birds of the air. The boy should have been put to sleep long since. She must hasten to him. How could she so utterly have forgotten him while dreaming out her future on that lonely rock! Quickly gathering her skirts about her, she half-leaped, half-ran down the well-trodden path that led into the open road, and in a few moments had reached the hotel, where she was spending the summer.

Suddenly she bethought herself of her father and mother, who were to arrive that evening, and who undoubtedly had already come,—were perhaps even now awaiting her return. She had received a telegram in the morning, announcing that Mr. and Mrs. Harland would come on the evening train, and requesting that rooms be reserved for them at the hotel. She looked at her watch and found that it was

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eight o'clock. They must have arrived fully a half-hour since. Hastening her footsteps, she soon found herself at the outer door leading to her apartments.

CHAPTER III

HER HERITAGE

"We shall have to be very careful," it was Mr. Harland who was speaking; "Julia is high-strung, and if she thinks we have come here to interfere with her, she will be very angry."

The woman standing outside, waiting for her father to finish, caught her breath. What did her parents know of her plans? Why should they interfere with her? She was accustomed to doing what she thought best to do, and to act independently. She seated herself for a moment in a chair nearby, to recover her composure.

"I think you had better leave this matter to me." It was her mother who was speaking now. "Julia is a sensible woman; and as soon as she learns that the people here are criticising her actions, she will be more careful."

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"Of course, there is nothing in this talk;" she could hear her father answer; "but we don't want Julia's good name dragged into the dust by a lot of verandah idlers, who haven't anything else to do but to tat lace and tear up other women's reputations."

The hot blood mounted to the listener's face. Verily, the old adage about eavesdroppers was being borne into effect. It was not her wish to overhear what they had to say. She had always maintained that she cared not what criticism of her conduct might be offered up, if only she could be spared the hearing. What right had any one to tamper with her good name? to discuss her conduct? How dare any one utter one disparaging word! She experienced a sense of outraged feeling that this love could be sullied by the black stigma of calumny, — this love which was the most sacred thing in her life, excepting only her love for her child.

Stilling as far as she was able the anger and resentment that battled for expression, she

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opened the door, and was soon in the loving arms of her parents,—her wrathful feelings dispelled for the time being by the warmth of their embrace.

“O Mother! Father!” she exclaimed. “Have you been waiting long? When did you arrive? Aren’t you tired?” her questions following one another in rapid succession. “And, oh!” she continued, “how glad I am to see you! I must show you to your rooms. Aren’t mine pretty?” She added, looking admiringly at the furnishings. “Your rooms are just below.”

She chattered on nervously, conscious of the fact that her parents were there for a purpose, and that they were treading on dangerous ground,—interfering with something with which they had no right to interfere. But she loved them, and they idolized her,—their only daughter,—to them the most beautiful, the most adorable creature the creator had ever fashioned.

“You must be tired after your journey,” she

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repeated; "shall I show you to your rooms?"

"You shouldn't remain out after dark alone, Julia," Mrs. Harland replied irrelevantly, but with much concern.

"But it's as light as day!" the daughter exclaimed, "and it's a beautiful night!" adding romantically, — as she drew the curtains aside, — "the moon is shining right over the ocean, making a wonderful path of gold and silver and pearl."

"But all alone!" the mother protested.

"That's why I like it," the daughter answered laughingly. "One gets so tired of people, — especially people at a summer hotel."

"And the women! — the way they talk about one another behind their backs!" Mrs. Harland became indignant, reminded of the calumnious gossip about her daughter.

"You wouldn't have them tell you what they think of you to your face!" the daughter replied with mock seriousness. "I don't care what people say about me," she added lightly,

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"if they will only say it behind my back;— oh! have you had dinner?" she suddenly thought to inquire.

"Have we had dinner, Annabel?"

"Of course, we have had dinner," Mrs. Harland answered with some show of spirit. "We dined on the train."

"You see, Julia," her father explained, "since your mother inaugurated this fletcherizing and dieting system, I never can tell whether I have dined or not; to put it poetically, I always feel within me an aching void. But she has run the gamut from hot water and cereals for breakfast, to no breakfast at all; and so now she will begin to head the other way. You know, Julia," he added significantly, "when things get to be so bad they can't get any worse, they always begin to get better."

"Do you think so, Father?"

"Surely, I do! but don't look so serious, Julia," he added, as Mrs. Hamilton's expression evidenced deeper concern than the remark seemingly called for. "Still this no breakfast

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plan is a pretty serious thing," he continued, "for a man who has been used to three square meals a day, — for how long is it, Annabel?"

"We've been married thirty-three years last Sunday," Mrs. Harland answered with exactness.

"Gee! Whiz!" Mr. Harland wheeled around suddenly — "that makes Julia" —

"Don't you dare say it!" the daughter answered laughingly as she placed her hand upon her father's lips. "When it comes to a woman's age, there are just two words in the English language you want to remember, — and those are — 'forget it.'"

"Shades of Methuselah! but time passes. What high jinks of a philosopher was it who said there wasn't any such thing as time? — time and space, wasn't it? Well, there's such a thing as time, all right, all right," he added, going over to the long pier glass and taking an inventory of his fifty-five years young; "you can prove it by me."

"Pshaw! Father. You are nothing but a

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big overgrown boy." Mrs. Hamilton patted him admiringly.

"Don't tack on 'all right' to everything you say, William," his wife protested.

"All right, Annabel. You are the best little woman in the world," he added, kissing his wife affectionately.

"There you go again!"

"I meant it! If all the rest of the women were like you, Annabel, they wouldn't have to hurl brickbats in order to get into parliament. We men should be glad to let them have their way."

"We don't want just our way. We want our rights, that's all," Mrs. Harland answered with considerable dignity.

"No; you don't want just your *way*. You want the earth, that's all."

"It's the principle we are working for."

"The principle!" Mr. Harland mockingly answered. "That's what every woman thinks she is after if it's only a street-car fare she has been cheated out of. It isn't the nickel!

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Oh, no! It is the *principle*. When you see a woman getting excited over a principle, you can take it from me, it's the nickel that's worrying her every time."

"Take it from me"! Really, William, you are letting yourself go dreadfully of late."

"Everything goes with me, Annabel. I'm no highbrow."

"You can at least be dignified," his wife answered, drawing herself up more rigidly than ever, if that were possible, by way of illustration.

"I've got all eternity to be dignified in;" Mr. Harland felt assured that this statement, at least, could not be contradicted with any degree of confidence. "I'll beat them all on dignity, when it comes to laying out my five feet ten. I'll be the most dignified remains that ever came down the pike."

"William!" Mrs. Harland exclaimed protestingly;—"put down that banana!" she added with much concern as her husband picked up a banana from a dish on the table.

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"Don't you know that bananas are very unhealthful?"

"Father, you're hungry; and I am going to telephone down to the dining-room for a tray."

"Don't, Julia!" Mrs. Harland intercepted her as she started for the telephone. "Your father has had enough to eat. Do you think he looks starved?"

"Not exactly!" Mrs. Hamilton laughed as she took in her father's avoirdupois.

"Where is the kiddie?" Mr. Harland suddenly exclaimed, for the first time noting the absence of the child.

"In my excitement I had forgotten all about him!" Mrs. Hamilton's voice was full of reproach for her thoughtlessness. "He must be playing with the children across the hall. I'll go and get him."

"Wait a few moments, Julia." Mrs. Harland turned to her husband. "Go down to the lobby and have a smoke, William. I want to talk with Julia."

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"All right, Annabell!—Don't put the boy to bed until I see him, will you, Julia?"

"No; I won't, Father," the daughter answered nervously, knowing that with his departure the light badinage that had served to delay the crucial moment would cease, and that her mother would at once proceed to discuss the subject uppermost in the minds of each.

As the door closed on Mr. Harland, each knew that the moment had come when there must be no shrinking from the duty before her; the mother fully alive to the difficulty of invading the sacred precincts of her daughter's heart, but buoyed up with the sense of her maternal rights to divert the calumny that was even now descending upon her beloved child; the daughter, on the other hand, as fully determined to brook no interference, not even from the parent who loved her dearer than her own life.

No sooner had her husband departed, than Mrs. Harland turned to her daughter,—her

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eyes filled with tears, which she tried in vain to keep back.

"O Julia! Julia!" was all that she could say, while she clasped her daughter to her heart, holding her tightly in her arms, as though to shield her from the lightening tongues of slander.

"There has been some idle gossip about you, dear," she at last found voice to say. "Isabel Berkeley returned yesterday, and she said that the women here were connecting your name with Mr. Forsyth, a lawyer from New York,—that you had been motoring with him and had also been seen with him at the Point. Isabel said that in the absence of your husband, you should be more careful."

The younger woman's eyes flashed fire as she answered coldly, "Is this what you have come to see me about?"

"Don't be angry, dear;" the mother answered with alarm. "You know that what I say is for your good. I can't stand calmly by, and see

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your name tarnished by a lot of gossiping women."

Her daughter refusing to answer, the mother continued, "You know, dear, I am thinking only of your happiness. I know there isn't any truth in what these women say. I know that they are lying;" she added, with some show of anger. "There isn't any truth in what they say, is there, dear?" she repeated anxiously, beginning to feel by her daughter's silence that there was cause for alarm. "Is there, Julia?" she finally demanded.

"How dare these women discuss my affairs! What right have they to criticise my conduct? I have never interfered with them."

"Don't be so angry, Julia!" the mother was now thoroughly alarmed. "Julia! tell me what has happened!"

"O Mother!" the daughter sobbed out her grief. "Joseph came home this afternoon. We had a terrible scene, and he went back to his club. Oh! I can't stand this any longer. I

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won't stand it. I don't have to stand it. Joseph doesn't love me, Mother, and I am not going to live with a man who doesn't love me."

"Your husband means all right, dear;" the elder woman hoped to appease her daughter's wrath.

"Joseph is selfish, Mother. He is utterly and thoroughly selfish. He neglects me and he is unkind to me,—he is cruel to me. He neglects me for weeks at a time. If he is not hunting or yachting, he is at the races, or else playing roulette until midnight. He had been gone six weeks ago to-day, and he hadn't written me one line,—not one word to show that he cared whether I was alive or dead. He has ceased to love me, Mother, and I am going to leave him. My decision is final."

"Julia!" the mother dropped into a chair, overcome by the shock that her daughter's communication had given her. Mr. and Mrs. Harland had only just returned from abroad, and so were not acquainted with the events

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that were working such disaster in their daughter's life.

"You married your husband for better or for worse;" Mrs. Harland remonstrated. "Joseph is just the kind of man to go to utter ruin if you let go your hand; and think how he loved you when he married you! Why, he worshipped you; he loves you still in his way."

"'In his way!'" The daughter's eyes flashed fire, as she paced angrily back and forth. "Yes! 'in his way!'" she repeated with some show of sarcasm.

"I know how I should be loved, and how I should love," she protested fiercely, while her cheeks reddened with excitement. "The man I love should be noble; should have high ideals; should be capable of making a great sacrifice, if necessary; — and O Mother!" she exclaimed, in an overwhelming burst of confidence, "I have met that man, and I love him! — I worship him! — I must have him in my life! — I *will* have him," she added defiantly.

"Julia!" her mother cried in alarm; "this

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will lead only to disgrace! Julia!" she seized her daughter's arm excitedly; "no good can come of this. It will bring you only trouble."

"It can't, Mother!—it is too pure;—too holy."

"You are beside yourself; you are out of your mind."

"No; I am not beside myself, and I am not out of my mind. But I am going to have this love in my life. I give you all warning," she added defiantly, "I am going to have this love no matter what the cost. I will give up everything for the man I love!—everything!" she repeated excitedly.

"Would you sacrifice your good name? your honor?" the mother had become thoroughly frightened. "If you couldn't get a divorce, would you leave your husband anyway?"

"Of course I can get a divorce, and then I shall marry Mr. Forsyth. It is love and love only that makes marriage sacred, and I am going to marry the man I love. Every being that God has ever created has a right to its

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mate, and I have the right to mine. It is my heritage. I will claim it! It is my right."

"But the boy?" the mother felt the timeliness of an appeal to the strong maternal sense that she knew her daughter possessed. "What about the boy?"

"I shall take him with me," the daughter answered quietly.

"But your husband, Julia! What would he do without Joseph? Why, he worships the boy. You have no right," the mother's tone had become severe, "to separate your husband from his child, nor your child from his father. And, Julia," alarmed by the disastrous possibilities of the situation, "if you were to leave your husband, and were unable to secure a divorce, he could get one from you under those circumstances, and then the court would give Joseph to his father. You see the court would rule that he belonged to his father."

"No! he is my child," — the daughter had become rebellious. "I bore him!" She was almost beside herself now with the contingency

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that the situation presented. "He is my child," she repeated. "I paid the price! I paid it in full! God!" her face became distorted, as she lived over again the agony of his birth. "No one shall take him from me. I would kill any one who would dare to do it."

Mrs. Harland, her handsome face showing keen distress in every feature, vainly attempted to allay the storm of wrath that her words had raised. Her daughter was evidently on the verge of nervous breakdown. For several weeks she had been severely taxed. Battling, as she had been, with the opposing forces,—duty and desire,—she had drawn heavily on the resources of her strength, and now the loan was about to be called. And the debt, too, unfortunately, was large; for nature had been a heavy lender.

During all the time she had been trying to reach a decision, she had been revolving over and over again, the question of whether she should follow that "higher than Happiness," to which the philosophy of Carlyle would

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lead, or whether her right to happiness did not overshadow the doctrine of duty.

Yes, she had told herself, duty to oneself was the first imperative. If every one would but do his duty toward himself, the world would have no need of martyrs. Why were the claims of one individual paramount to those of another? Abnegation of one's rights meant merely a corresponding arrogation of the claims of another. Why should she sacrifice her happiness for another's? Were not her needs equally vital? Why ask the question, "By what Act of Parliament was it ordained that thou shouldst be happy"? Carlyle's philosophy,—she would have none of it. Why should she not be happy? Why should not everyone seek happiness as the highest, the greatest good to be attained by the individual?

Yes; it was clear to her,—very clear,—she told herself for the hundredth,—rather the ten hundredth time. All this shuttle-cocking back and forth, was over; and she was in no mood now to take up the controversy with her

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mother. It had been quite a sufficient tax on her strength to fight the battle with herself as opponent, her inner self,—her conscience, if she would have it so. She had finished. The decision had been in her favor. She had won by fair means, and was now entitled to her reward.

Mrs. Harland saw that the discussion had reached a point where further interference was futile,—might even become serious in its results; so with a view to averting her daughter's attention from the subject uppermost in the mind of each, she remarked on the prolonged absence of little Joseph, and expressed anxiety as to his whereabouts.

She had no sooner spoken, when the little fellow, accompanied by his grandfather, bounded into the room, and almost simultaneously, into her arms, where he was all but smothered with kisses; for he was a great favorite with both his grandparents, and especially with his grandmother.

"When did you and Grandpa get here?" he

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demanded, "and how long are you going to stay? and oh! I wish you wouldn't ever go away again, for I haven't any one to play with except Father, and he is gone most of the time."

A low whistle interrupted his chatter, and also reminded him that he was to ask for pennies, as well as permission to accompany the boy of the whistle to the street below, where an "organ-man" with a wonderful monkey, was grinding out the popular strains from the "Bohemian Girl," much to the annoyance of the guests at the hotel, but very much to the delight of the children who had congregated.

"But, my dear," his mother protested, "I can't let you go down on the street alone at this hour; and besides it's your bedtime. You should have been asleep an hour ago."

"I'll only be gone a few minutes, Mother, dear; and there is a big boy waiting for me; he'll take care of me,—and oh! please give me a nickel for the organ-man. He has the cutest little monkey, and he has some clappers, and he

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claps them just like that," bringing the palms of his little hands together. "Oh! quick, Mother, dear; please let me go."

"I can't have you go with strange little boys, dear."

"He is a nice little boy, Mother," the child answered dejectedly.

"Bring your friend in and let me see him," the mother replied, at the same time proceeding to open the door.

With the keen intuition especially present in children, Joseph laid his hand on his mother's arm, and in an outburst of self-confessed guilt, — feeling, too, that with his confession, there would end his chances of seeing the wonderful exhibition in the street below, cried out pathetically,

"O Mother! He's colored!"

The situation carried with it a sense of humor, in spite of the tragic note in the child's voice, and the dejected air of the little colored boy, who confronted Mrs. Hamilton as she opened the door.

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"O Mother!" he repeated simultaneously with the opening of the door; "Please, don't! It's Tommy!" the hopelessness of his appeal showing that he had already anticipated his mother's answer, and that her decision would prove fatal to his cause.

For a moment, Mrs. Hamilton stood looking at the two children,—the colored boy, showing by his air the keenness of his disappointment,—her own child, with a caught-in-the-act look, plainly written on his handsome face. Their dejection, however, was immediately changed to rejoicing, for Mrs. Hamilton, with the democracy of the typical American mother, answered encouragingly, "Why, of course, you may go with Tommy; but only for a few minutes," she added, taking some pennies from her purse, and handing them to the children, who, in their delight, hardly stopped to thank her and were soon on their way to the street below.

"The child should be in bed, Julia. You are too indulgent." Mrs. Harland risked the

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chance of offending her daughter by her interference, for the sake of the child.

"Boys can be boys but once;" Mr. Harland vouchsafed, having overheard his wife's remarks as he entered the room; his youthful face, however, with its upward curves, betraying the fact that he had never quite got over being a boy, and a very happy boy at that.

"Come, Annabel," he added, "I have the keys to our rooms. I think we'll say good-night to our little girl." To him, his beautiful daughter had always been his "little girl,"—the greatest gift the good Lord had ever given him.

They had had but two children, a son and a daughter; the son had married several years previously, and had gone West on a large ranch, where he had amassed a fortune. He had never returned and his parents had ceased to look to him for the companionship which they found in their daughter. She had never been far away from them at any time,—never from their hearts. Marrying, at the age of

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twenty, the son of a wealthy stock-broker, she had continued to live in New York, not far distant from her parents' home. All their interests had been centered in their daughter, whom they had reared in love and tenderness, and whose devotion to them in return had always been ideal.

"Julia looks tired!" the father remarked. "Come, Annabel, we can see her again in the morning."

"Get a good night's sleep, little daughter;" the father kissed her affectionately in parting.

"Good-night, Father, dear,—and Mother, too;" she added lovingly, embracing them both. The elder woman pressed her daughter to her heart, as though she would hold her there forever against the evil that seemed so close at hand.

Her parents had no sooner left her, than a messenger handed her a letter, which had just come by special delivery. Closing the door on the retreating figure of the carrier, she hastily tore open the envelope, and proceeded to read

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the impassioned words, pressing the letter to her lips, and drinking in its contents, as though it were rare wine, intoxicating her with the richness of its vintage.

“My Beloved!”

She dwelt upon the opening words, as if to sense their full significance, glorying the while in the love that was filling her veins with its rare elixir.

Going to her desk, she penned the few lines that her answer called for. She would mail the letter at once, and it would reach its destination in the morning. Throwing a light shawl over her shoulders, she started for the postal station, only a short distance from the hotel.

At the door, she encountered the maid, who was about to enter with some fresh linen. Her little son, too, made his appearance at the same time.

“Come, darling, you must go to bed. Mother will return in a few minutes.”

The child looked wistfully after her. “Come

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back soon before I go to sleep, won't you, Mother, dear?"

He was an affectionate child, and the sweetest moments to him and to her both, in the twenty-four hours of the day, were when, with his arms about her neck, she hushed him to sleep.

"I suppose the letter is to Papa," he remarked to the maid, as he started to untie his shoes. "I wish my papa would come back. I haven't any one to play with when he is gone. There's an awful big knot in my shoe, and I can't undo it. My! how quickly you undid it," he exclaimed, as the maid untied the laces.

"Well, you see, I know how," the woman answered quietly. "I know all about those knots that get in little boys' shoes."

"Have you got a little boy?" the child asked.

"I had a little boy," the woman answered, with something in her voice that sounded very much like a sob.

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"Is he dead? Oh! don't cry! He is an angel now."

"He is an angel, dear, but he isn't dead." The woman was crying softly to herself.

"Goody! Then maybe some day I'll see him. Will you bring him here to play with me? I am so lonely."

"I haven't any little boy to play with, and my father is away most of the time," he continued. "He has large devestments to look after, so Mother says."

"*Investments*," said the maid, almost smiling through her tears, which she tried in vain to force back.

"I guess that's it; but my father is coming back soon. Maybe he will come back to-night. I am not going to sleep, because he may come back to-night."

"Oh, yes! you must go to bed, and then you'll grow up to be a nice, big boy. You know you only grow when you're asleep."

"Is your little boy growing up to be a nice big boy?"

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"I hope so."

"You hope so! Don't you know so?" exclaimed the child.

"I haven't seen him for a long time."

"Oh, goodness! how can he get along without you? I don't know what I'd do without my mother."

"Come, dear, I am going to put you to bed;" the maid replied; and carrying the child tenderly in her arms to the adjoining room, she laid him gently in his little bed next to his mother's, where he soon fell asleep, thoroughly exhausted with the excitement of the day, and the lateness of the hour.

CHAPTER IV

THE CUP OF EXPERIENCE

The maid knelt at the bedside of the sleeping child, and the tears she had tried so hard to suppress, now flooded her face, while her slight form shook with the violence of her grief.

“O Edwin! My little Edwin!” she sobbed.
“How could I have wrecked my life as I did!”

She swayed back and forth in her grief; and so keen was her suffering, that she did not hear the soft footfalls that were approaching her; for Mrs. Hamilton had entered the room, and seeing the grief-stricken maid kneeling by the sleeping child, was now quickly making her way to her side, to offer such comfort as was in her power to give.

“Oh, my little Edwin!” was all that the

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maid could find voice to say, as she arose to her feet.

"You are separated from him." Mrs. Hamilton was all sympathy. "You have to work and so can't have him with you. How pitiful! how cruel!"

"No! It isn't that!" the maid answered, hesitatingly. "How can I tell you? I am separated from my husband, divorced, and he will not let me even see my child. I was foolish — crazy, mad. I had a beautiful home, everything that money could buy, but I got the idea that my husband no longer loved me. He was away from home a great deal, and when he remained away night after night, I became mad with jealousy. I thought surely that he had learned to love some one else, and in my despair I did an awful thing. I ruined my home. I ruined my life,—my husband's life,—my child's,—and now! Oh! I am so wretched,"—the woman broke down in a spasm of grief.

"I know! I know! I see it all. You

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thought your husband no longer loved you, and in your despair, you turned to another."

Mrs. Hamilton was alive to the similarity of the woman's tragedy to her own,—this discovery of the loss of a husband's love,—or at least of its apparent loss.

"And I didn't even love this man. I have never loved any one but my husband. I don't know how I came to wreck my life. My husband bought me everything that a woman could wish for, but I didn't care for jewels or pretty clothes; I cared only for my husband and my child; and so when I thought I had lost my husband's love forever, it didn't seem that anything after that mattered. Now I can see that it did matter,—that even if I had lost my husband, I still had my boy and my home."

"Can't something be done?" Mrs. Hamilton clasped her hands tightly together, as the distressing phases of the situation were being gradually revealed. "Surely something can be done!"

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"No! nothing can be done!" the woman answered hopelessly. "If I could only undo what has been done! If I could only have my little Edwin, or even see him."

"Surely, your husband will let you see your son!" Mrs. Hamilton stood aghast at the appalling consequences of the woman's rash act. "Surely, your husband will let you *see* him!" she repeated.

"No! he will not. Once I got into the house late at night and he ordered me to leave, and never to enter his home again. No; I have tried several times to see him, but the servants have been instructed not to let me in."

"How cruel! We must arrange it so that you can at least see your child. What is your name, may I ask?"

"Edwina Manning. My husband is John Manning, of the firm of Manning and Mosely, —lawyers," she added.

Mrs. Hamilton raised her eyes in astonishment. "Mr. Manning and my brother Earl were chums at Harvard."

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"Mr. Manning was graduated from Harvard."

"And he used to spend his vacations at our home. I am wondering whether Mother could not see Mr. Manning in your behalf. He will remember Mother. She was almost as fond of him as if he had been her son. Earl used to be quite jealous. I feel sure she could help you."

"If she only could; but I fear that Mr. Manning would become very angry."

"Mother will be very tactful so as not to offend him," Mrs. Hamilton replied.

Mrs. Manning wrung her hands in despair.

"I can understand everything now that a woman suffers when she makes the awful mistake which I have made. I used to think that women who went wrong, were wilful; that they deliberately went down to their ruin; I see now that they make mistakes because they are weak, not sinful. If my husband had only not let go his hand. He let his business, his club, his friends, consume all

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his time, and he forgot me. Then I began to dwell upon my wrongs, until I must have gone out of my mind. I could think only of myself, — of my lonely life, — of the love I thought I had lost, — until I ruined my life.”

“Don’t let this ruin your life.”

“I can’t get away from it.”

“Don’t try! — be big enough to stand by what you have done. Turn to the great souls for comfort, — those who have striven and suffered and conquered.” Mrs. Hamilton placed her arm about the woman consolingly. “Let them inspire you. Say to yourself daily those wonderful lines of Victor Hugo:

“‘Be like a bird
That pausing in its flight, —
Awhile on bough too slight, —
Feels it give way beneath her, and yet sings,
Knowing that she hath *wings*.’”

“My wing is broken. You don’t know what it means to have had this wretched experience.”

“You can use your experience for your development,” Mrs. Hamilton argued. “You can

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become better through it, nobler, more charitable, more human. Haven't you ever thought of it in that way?"

"But the suffering" —

"You can make it pay you back ten thousand fold."

"But the price" —

"It must always be paid. But there is always the gain. Your eyes have been opened upon a new world, — a world of suffering to be sure, but of infinite sympathy. Only sorrow can bring this."

"My eyes have been opened to my sin."

"Don't speak of it as your sin. Think of it as life's forces working within you toward the light. The way was dark simply because your eyes had become blinded for a little while; — and your father and mother?" Mrs. Hamilton essayed to turn the woman's thought into another channel.

"My mother died when I was very young. My father sent me away to school when I was old enough to go. He was a very busy

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man, and I saw him only at rare intervals. I used to spend my vacations with my friends. He denied me his home when this trouble came upon me; that is why I am here. I have been very fortunate in getting this position, although it is only temporary."

"I am looking for a tutor for my little son. Should you like the position?"

"You are very kind. Indeed, I should like it very much," the woman responded gratefully.

Mrs. Hamilton gave her a card, bearing her name and address, and promised to send for her as soon as she should return to New York.

"If I had only not been so selfish; if I could have foreseen that there was something worse than the loss of a husband's love,—the loss of my child, my home, and"—covering her face with her hands,—“of everything that a woman holds most sacred! Oh!” she cried, as she sobbed aloud,—“if I could only blot it all out! If I could only forget it! If only I had been saved before it was too late. I have lost everything, my husband, my child, my

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honor. If I could warn others before it is too late!"

"Each one must drink the bitter cup of experience. It is the only way we can learn." Mrs. Hamilton was thinking now of her own situation.

"No! No! it is not! I am sure I could save another from wrong doing if I were to tell her of my own wretchedness,—the misery, the agony, caused by my act. No woman would ever forget her husband, her home, her child, if she could but listen to my story. I must tell it! I must help others!"

Mrs. Hamilton paced back and forth excitedly, the expression of her face showing that the last words had deeply affected her. She could sense the whole wretched, miserable situation, with its ugly incontrovertible facts staring her in the face. This tragedy, so like her own in its possibilities for suffering; and yet so different. In her case, there would be no going back; no bitter denunciation of self; no bemoaning of her fate! rather her conquest

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over the inexorable laws that had bound her; this breaking away, would mean freedom to her;—the consummation of her love. No! her case was altogether unlike this unhappy woman's. She looked at her in extreme pity,—so young, so beautiful, so bruised in spirit; her shapely head, bowed on her breast, showing the graceful curve of the slender neck. She could think only of a broken lily on its stem, or a violet crushed in the storm.

She was prevented from further parallelizing their respective situations by her little son, who disturbed by their voices, had suddenly awakened. Edwina Manning, reminded again of her loss, began to cry afresh; and bidding Mrs. Hamilton a hurried good-night, quickly left her apartment to sob out her grief alone in her cheerless room.

"She has a little boy too, Mother, just like me;" the child looked sympathizingly after the departing figure. "He is an angel, but he isn't dead. That's why she's crying."

"Rock me, Mother," the child pleaded.

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"Rock me in your arms by the window. I want to see the moon. I haven't seen the moon for an awful long time."

Always indulgent to his slightest whim, if, in granting it, no harm would result, the mother carried the child to the open window, and rocked him gently to sleep, singing the while, the song he loved the best,

Beautiful moon in the sky so high,
Let down your silvery beams;
And I will climb up to your golden boat
And sail to the land of dreams.

"And when I come back from my sail, Father will be here, won't he, Mother?" the little voice gradually died away as the "golden boat" sailed him out on her beautiful sea.

The mother looked at the child asleep upon her breast,—so like his father,—the same high white forehead, with the light brown hair, thrown carelessly back; the same contour of the shapely head; the same handsome mouth; a miniature of what the man was to be; and

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her heart ached with a forboding fear for his future, and what that future would bring. Would he follow in his father's footsteps? Would he develop the same weaknesses? Could he be prevented from taking the same course if a strong hand were to guide him? Could it steer him past the rocks into a safe harbor, if she watched its course, inch by inch, sitting by the pilot-wheel herself, never letting go her hand,—always keeping in sight the path? Surely she could do this; she could save him. She would devote her life to him.

Something arrested the flow of her thought; an indefinable something. It was as if a hidden spring had suddenly snapped, moved by unseen hands. What was this, that made her catch her breath quickly, and divert her attention from its object? It seemed to rebuke her by its silence; it would not speak out its censure, but seemed to clutch her with an avenging hand. Gradually it came upon her just what this menacing thing was. By a train of subjective reasoning, her mind had averted from

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the consideration of her responsibility as a mother, to her duty towards her husband, and she was now being called on to answer the same question in regard to him. She was not superstitious, and therefore was able to trace this questioning,—this sudden demand for an accounting of her stewardship to its source, knowing fully that it was attributable to no occult power.

Yes; that was it. It was merely the subconscious mind working through suggestion. It was but natural that her thought should be thus directed,—the child lying there, the miniature of his father,—with his unconscious appeal for his future welfare,—the necessity for guidance, demanding a strong hand to direct his footsteps aright,—and then of course, the transference of thought by suggestion, to that other, who, though man, was yet child in his need for protection.

Could she not guide him too? Could she save him? Was it too late? If not, would she? *Would* she? Her face flushed with excitement

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at the possibility of the assumption of this burden. "No! it is too heavy!" she told herself. "I cannot! I will not! It should not be expected of me." No! She decided. His mother should have borne this burden. And yet, there had been no burden when the son had passed into her keeping. "Her keeping!" The words hurt her. Had she broken a trust? She would reason no more. She was angry with herself for having permitted her thoughts to carry her thus far. There should be no more of this kind of sophistry! Did not the maternal in all women cry out when confronted with helplessness? She buried her face in the soft warm neck of the sleeping child. the better to resist this nerve-racking inquisitiveness, somewhat as the ostrich, when scenting danger, buries his head in the friendly, yielding sand.

She pressed her lips to the velvet cheek, like marble in its whiteness, softened by the gules of moonlight streaming in, and silently breathed a prayer for strength,—more strength than she

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now possessed, to guide aright this little life that had been entrusted to her keeping. She passed her hand over the smooth, bare arms and legs, and pressed him tightly to her heart to make assurance doubly sure, this sense of ownership; and then she thought of that other mother, weeping her heart out alone;—of the motherless child, yearning, too, for the touch of the hand, the good-night kiss. Her eyes filled with tears of sympathy, and again flashed in anger, that such a thing could be,—this cruel separation of mother and child.

“No one shall rob me of my child! I would take him to the uttermost ends of the earth before I would give him up!”

Finally, her eyelids, too, closed in sleep, lulled at last to rest, by the rhythmic beating of the waves against the shore, with the softly beaming moon shining a benediction upon them.

CHAPTER V

THE DREAM

A half hour passed before the mother awakened. She had dreamed a strange dream. She dreamed that she was standing at mid-day upon a high cliff,—the highest at the Point; and, that becoming dizzy from long gazing at the sun, she was about to fall into the surging waters below, when a hand from behind suddenly seized her arm, and averted her fall. Her dream was so vivid that she awakened, and turning to see who her rescuer might be, her eyes encountered the gaze of her husband, who had a moment before entered the room, and was bending over the sleeping mother and child.

“You startled me!” Mrs. Hamilton spoke in a low voice, and pointed to the child. The

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father took him tenderly in his arms, and kissing him gently so as not to awaken him, carried him back to bed, returning in a moment to where his wife was standing.

"Well!" he exclaimed interrogatively as he re-entered the room, the unsteadiness of his voice and gait showing that he had been drinking heavily.

Mrs. Hamilton looked at him without replying, and experienced a shock as she noted his disordered appearance. He had never before shown by outward signs that he was under the influence of liquor.

"Give me another chance, Julia!" the man knelt before her. "This time I'll make good. When I carried the boy to bed, I made up my mind that it would be the last time you would have cause to complain. Take me back, Julia!" he pleaded.

"I can't, Joseph!" the woman cried. "I can't sacrifice my whole life. I have wasted,—worse than wasted my life with you. I can't be your wife again. I can't!" The woman

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raised her tear-stained face to his. "It is too late. There must be love and faith,— absolute love and trust; otherwise, marriage is a farce. We have come to the parting of the ways, Joseph. You must go your way, and I will go mine."

"I'll go mine!" he repeated with an oath,—
"and I'll go quick."

"Joseph!" Mrs. Hamilton tried to stay the angry man, who pushed her roughly aside and rushed out of the room.

"Joseph!" she called, as he closed the door.

She had become thoroughly frightened; the desperate look upon his face forboded ill. Had she done wrong in her zeal to be honest with him,— to do nothing clandestinely? to treat him fairly in the matter? Should she have chosen another time to tell him that her decision was final? In his present state, had it not been most unwise to tell him— dangerous, even? She ran into the hall, thinking to reach him before he could get away. He was not there. She opened the outer door, but could see no

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trace of him, unless he were in the cab that was at the moment disappearing around the corner. She returned to her room, and tried to feel that there was no immediate cause for concern; that he would do nothing rash, and that the whole matter would adjust itself;—a view that optimistic natures are apt to take when confronted with perplexities offering no immediate solution.

Affectionate at heart, Mr. Hamilton had one of those natures which yielded to the amenities of the occasion. When with his family, and not under the influence of liquor, he evinced a fondness for them, which he undoubtedly felt at the time. But when away, he seemed to forget them entirely—to be lost to everything but the pursuit of selfish pleasures. A rich man's son, pampered by his parents in his youth, unrestrained by his teachers at college, and unburdened with business cares at a time when he should have been taking on the responsibilities that other men, unendowed with wealth, are obliged to assume, his conduct

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was such as often accompanies a nature too weak to resist temptation. Never at any time in his life had he been obliged to concern himself with the business of life and its duties; maybe he had not had a fair chance; mental gymnastics are as necessary to the development of mental muscles as physical gymnastics to the development of the body.

Mr. Forsyth, on the contrary, was a poor man's son. Coming from a family of lawyers, he had made up his mind to win success, and each year carried him nearer to the judicial bench for which he was striving. Another year would place him there. The realization of his ambitions, with the possession of Julia Hamilton, would be his reward for concentration of effort, for endeavor that knew no such word as fail,—for that utter refusal to recognize human limitation.

It was all so terrible,—their marriage; their miserable failure to make each other happy; to live harmoniously,—those two who had vowed to love each other till death should part them.

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What mockery!—those words! How they rang in her ears. This, then, was the end of her maiden dream of love, when her knight should come to woo her, and should take her to his heart, to dwell there evermore. What a farcical thing was this marriage! Was it possible to find happiness in marriage? Were there ever two persons created who could marry and “live happy ever after?” Yes; there were her father and mother; they were happy in each other’s love. They surely were of one heart, one soul, one mind. This thing was then possible,—happiness in marriage. Why had her experience been stamped with failure? Was it all her husband’s fault? Was it all her’s? Was it the fault of each that the condition she was now facing had been brought about?

That little rift within the lute! When did it occur? There must have been some particular moment when this rift,—the first little beginning, had been made. They had begun their life together with honeyed words, with loving caresses, with tender solicitude, with the pang

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of parting when absence, even though short, had become necessary. They had started out on their journey, just like countless hundreds,—millions before them,—had done, and would continue to do. Then why had they come to this parting of the ways? If they had not married, would they have remained lovers? Was it the inevitable law of change that made for conditions like these? Was it a miserable consequence of conformity to laws set up by man? Was it not time that a re-adjustment of present conditions should take place,—of these outgrown men's laws,—if this was what they led to? this then *was* its great climacteric, which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, must inevitably result. There were, of course, her father and mother;—this was the one case in the hundred,—the exception to prove the rule, that of all miserable wretched failures, of all disastrous fiascos, marriage is the arch failure. Of course it was! and yet, what could she suggest? what could any one suggest as a corrective?

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"It may be," she told herself, "that successful marriage is possible, regarded as an institution, only when the participants have been schooled into an understanding each of his and her obligations; the relations that each should and must sustain one to the other."

Obligation! How she hated the word! How could two persons who truly loved each other, tolerate it! It had no legitimate place in the vocabulary of love. Love knights each subject its sceptre touches! "Yes! That is it!" she exclaimed triumphantly, "love equalizes; in consequence, love and duty are distinct. By their very nature, each is absolute. Love requites love with love. Love is the coin with which love pays its debt. Duty digs the grave of love; and, conversely, duty dies with love's birth.

"Happiness," she reasoned, "is a third element; it is correlative neither to duty nor love; it is a resultant; a by-product, of which either duty or love may exist as a producing factor, but the important element in the producing

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is the element of *self*,—*the individual*,—his *view-point*.

“Duty, love, and happiness, then are as separate as parallel lines, which might touch infinity, sooner than meet, and there must always be present the determining element of self. Some, there are, who can find happiness by obeying the call of duty; others, the voice of love. *It all depends upon the individual.* Carlyle was wrong. Duty is not higher than happiness; at best it can be but her footstool. Happiness is the ultimatum of existence. It is the highest, the maximum attainment of human endeavor. Happiness, then, is possible without love; yes, but only where duty is the watchword, and where it finds gratification in self-denial. Happiness then is possible, when duty is left undone; yes, where love is the goal, and where the individual recognizes the superiority of his rights over the claims of others.

“This is the secret of the sphinx,” she exclaimed, triumphant with the sense of having

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solved the riddle of the universe. "So whether one obeys the call of either duty or love, happiness is possible in each case."

There was no general rule, however, that could measure the degree of happiness, nor that could determine that happiness would result at all; for the important element, being the individual himself, it would follow that, in every instance, he was the determinate factor. So then, each must judge for himself what was essential to him. Conduct must be considered only from the view-point of the individual. There was no code that could compass universality in ethics.

And now love and duty were knocking at her door for admission. Which should she permit to enter? Either could bring her happiness. It depended on her view-point. Yes; she had coolly reasoned that out to a finish! She certainly had made no mistake in her conclusion; she could be happy in either case; that was possible. It was only a question, then, of the point of view.

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Adherence to the claims of duty, was, of course, some handed-down product of the dark ages, before mankind had awakened to the claims of the *ego*,—its priority of demand transcending all others. Only an enlightened being could see the fallacy of reasoning that emphasized the claims of some one other than oneself. But, of course, if she were not able to get rid of tradition, she must suffer as martyrs had suffered before her. As for herself, love should crown her queen, subject to no commands but her own.

But who shall be the judge as to which has the higher claim, love or duty? Love is of God! duty is man-made, and like all man-made things, liable to imperfections. Was that last conclusion true? Does not man more often improve on nature than detract from it? Is it not the test of man's progress, this wresting from nature her unfinished, abortive product, and carrying it to perfection? Could duty be the flower of love, its most beautiful blossom, expressing perfection?

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"No!" she exclaimed exultingly. "The path of duty is strewn with the bones of martyrs. Love leads to Elysian fields, to Olympian heights, where its devotees dwell with Gods, and drink the elixir of immortality. Love is ruler over all! The King! My King! All Hail!"

And yet this clinging vesture of tradition, — this part of us that will not let go. Why must her thought go out to that other, whom she had promised to love, honor, and obey? Why must she feel towards him as towards an erring child, — the desire to save him from his one enemy, — himself! Why should she? She married to be loved, — to be protected. Why should she turn these tables? — tables of stone, — of iron, — no! The demand upon her strength was too great! Carlyle was a dyspeptic invalid, who saw life from the narrow view-point of a disordered esophagus.

A knock at her outer door startled her, for the hour was late. Could it be her husband returning? Or, possibly, Edwina Manning,

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unable to sleep, tortured by the miserable self-condemning for her misguided act, — always visitant at night, — like Banquo's ghost, — that would not "out" any more than would the cursed spot on the little hand of Macbeth's spouse.

She opened the door, and encountered the one person whom she had least expected to see. It was Mr. Forsyth who stood before her, awaiting an invitation to enter.

His appearance at that hour, startled her. Had anything untoward happened? What could have brought him there?

"Why did you come?" she exclaimed.

"How could you?" she demanded, as she buried her face in her hands.

The man answered her questionings with avowals of his love.

"But here!" Mrs. Hamilton looked in the direction of the room where the sleeping child lay. "Not here!"

"Why not?" the man pleaded passionately. "I love you! It is the divine love, Julia, that

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comes but once to a man for the woman who was made for him."

"There is something holier than what you feel for me," the woman answered nervously. "There is Joseph!—his child, too, you know. At the Point,—at evening,—with the stars—and the moon overhead,—it was different,—but here"—

"You are excited! You are not yourself! You are going to belong to me, Julia!" he exclaimed, seizing her in his strong embrace.

"Don't kiss me! Not now; not here!" she exclaimed angrily, overcome by the overwhelming odds that the situation presented.

The man met her angry protestations with anger, but fiercer than hers, just as his love for her transcended in degree the intensity of hers. He argued for the supremacy of his claims over those of another, even though that other were her husband. By a process of reasoning, while conceding the priority of her husband's rights, he showed her how these were now forfeited. Her husband had had his

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opportunity, and he had abused it; in consequence, he was no longer entitled to her consideration. Furthermore, he had capitulated, had deserted the citadel. Why should not the conqueror enter and take possession?

His arguments were convincing, winning for him the success which had never failed him at the bar, and which had gained him a name in a city where only rare ability makes distinction possible.

Mr. Forsyth drew the woman closely to him. She no longer resisted, but lay passively in his arms, her glorious eyes meeting his in love's unspoken message. He pressed his lips upon the soft, brown hair, the beautiful forehead, the perfect mouth.

"Is it you, Papa?"

The little voice so full of glad welcome, calling from the inner room, broke in startlingly on the pair, disagreeably suggestive of claims other than their own, — of situations disastrous, climacteric, — tragic consequences, following possibly in their train. All this

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flashed through their minds quickly, illuminating their sense of the complexities of their relationship; of the hopelessness of an endeavor to realize an insular detachment that would recognize only their claims.

The light was dim, and the child, coming towards the pair,—as yet hardly awakened from his sleep, did not discover his mistake.

“Is it you, Papa?” he repeated, running towards the open door, through which Mr. Forsyth had quietly passed; for Mrs. Hamilton, foreseeing the necessity of immediate action, had quickly opened the door leading into the outer hall.

“Oh! Has Papa gone?” the child threw himself on the floor in a burst of bitter disappointment, as he watched the receding figure of the man.

“Has Papa gone without kissing me good-bye?” he cried tearfully, demandingly, with a sense of rights outraged; of vantage taken while asleep.

“Has he gone to stay? O Mother!” he

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bowed his face in his hands and wept. "Isn't he coming back? Has he gone away to stay?"

The woman standing there with eyes ablaze and cheeks aflame, her nerves keyed up to their highest pitch, turned the lock of the door, and calmly answered,

"Yes."

CHAPTER VI

THE SANATORIUM

It was nearly noon the next day before Mrs. Hamilton awakened from the restless sleep that had followed a restless night. She had thrown herself upon the bed with her child, and had lain there till daybreak before disrobing, going over and over again, the exciting incidents of the evening. Her matters had indeed reached a climax, and she felt like a shipwrecked sailor, who leaves a sinking ship for a life-boat equally unseaworthy; and so she had passed a wretched, wakeful night, revolving over and over again, the questions that she had thought had been settled forever.

She had told herself that, with the waking day, these ghosts of the night would disappear;

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but it was now high noon, the sun was streaming in upon her, and still these creatures of the night lingered. Were they always to remain? Could she not banish them? She tried to raise her hands to her eyes, — the light annoyed her; but her hands refused to obey. What had happened to her in the night? Her arms fell powerless on the counterpane. She thought to touch the bell at the side of her bed, but the effort was too great. It suddenly assumed mammoth proportions. It was impossible to raise her arm sufficiently high. She tried to turn her thoughts in pleasant channels; to think of something that would interest her. She thought of her child, of her parents who had recently arrived, and must be anxiously awaiting her appearance; for having been separated from her during the summer, there would be much to talk about, but she did not wish to talk, not even think.

Little Joseph; he must have got up quietly, so as not to disturb her. He was thoughtful for his years. Undoubtedly, he was with his

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grandparents. It didn't matter; she could not even feel concerned as to his whereabouts. Nothing seemed to matter; to be important; to be even interesting. She wondered whether her sense of feeling had died, and whether she would ever again care for anybody, or anything. She certainly did not now. She felt discordant with herself even; of course with her parents, or rather with her mother, siding as she had with her son-in-law, disclaiming her daughter's rights to her freedom, and the ownership of her child. Even the love that had absorbed her whole being seemed already to have faded into something undiscernable, unreal, undesirable even. Her roseate dream had taken on a dull color, as if its brightness were not a part of itself, but had derived its splendor from some other source, shining as it were, merely by reflected light, like some lesser planet in the heavens.

This love then was some lesser thing, — this Sun-god that was to envelop her with its radiant glory. It hurt her to think that its brilliance

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was but borrowed splendor, — this golden ball of fire in her heaven!

Still, was the sun itself daily luminant? Was its splendor not often dimmed by influences external? It calmed her to think that her love too might be so affected, and that the change was due to her temporary blindness of vision.

No! she decided; her love was not changed! and yet, she did not want to think of this love. It made her feel inharmonious with all that she had been in harmony with, — her parents' love, — her love for her child, — her responsibility to her husband. What was this that had come between her and the love she had felt for one until recently only a stranger to her? Had her love then been only an hallucination! This adoration, this worship — was it a chimera of her brain only? Surely, she could not have been mistaken in herself. These mad riotings of her heart, her whole nature crying out its demand for this love, — there surely had been no doubt of the validity of the claim! What then had been the meaning of this response of

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her whole being to the call? If the voice were not false, why then this feeling of listlessness, of indifference, — unresponsiveness?

His latest letter lay on the stand by her bed; — the maid must have entered quietly and left it there, — but she did not even care to read it. She was angry with herself at her want of steadfastness, — her fickleness, — she hesitated at the word, — she who had always been the soul of honor and sincerity. Could that be it? Was she fickle, untrustworthy? Had she not been planning to give up all, — husband, father, mother, — no; not all; not her child, — no; but all else for the man to whom she would have dared even heaven itself to come between her and this love?

She turned her face to the wall, and tried not to think. She finally concluded that she must be ill. Yes; that must be it. She felt no pain, but there could be no other solution for her present condition.

And indeed she was ill; — very ill, the house-

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physician said an hour later, when summoned to her bedside by her mother, who, alarmed at the continued absence of her daughter, had entered the room. "Complete break-down requiring perfect rest and quiet, with the Ocean View Sanatorium as the alterative," was the verdict.

And so the sanatorium was now to become the mediatory whereby she was to regain her health; for she was to be taken there that very afternoon and was to remain a month at least, — maybe two or three, the doctor could not say at that time. Too big a dose of afternoon teas with too frequent attendance at card-parties, was his diagnosis, — these she disclaimed, as falling too far below her standard of time values to be worthy of her attention.

"Too many parties and theatres, Mrs. Hamilton!" the young physician probably got as near to the facts in her case as many an older and wiser than he had done before him in countless others. What mattered the cause

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of her illness? the same corrective was required as though her ailment had originated in physical disorder.

The human heart! strange it is, that when sickened by the little God, Love, it will yield to the skillful touch of human hands.

The Sanatorium! What stories could be written on its walls!—of broken hearts healed by its soothing balms; of blasted hopes rekindled by its fires; of dead sorrows buried beneath new joys! The human heart! Who shall say that half the “ills that flesh is heir to,” are not traceable to that little, pulsing, throbbing, bi-valve!—our whole being, physical and spiritual, controlled by this little auricled, ventricular body. Let it beat fast, and behold! the world is under our feet to be trampled upon or to uplift us as we choose. We are Gods and need but nod to be obeyed. Let our pulses lag, and the world is a sepulchre, filled with the buried dead of our vanished hopes.

O hearts of ours! Beat fast! Beat fast while

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yet there's life. Let us be Gods so long as there is breath to breathe "I AM."

And so Julia Hamilton, her over-wrought nerves demanding their due, — and that with interest, compounded still with interest, — accompanied by her father and mother and little son, found herself driven over the smooth, macadam roads, down past the Point, where she had dreamed her mid-summer dream of love; past the curve in the bay where she had walked and talked and planned her future, with the man, but for whom she would not now be on her way to nature's cure; past all the familiar landmarks to this home of rest where she was to remain until restored to her former exuberant health.

"Will Papa be there?" the child asked. "Shall I see him when I get there? Mother! will Father be there?" he repeated.

"Don't trouble your mother, Joseph." Mrs. Harland took the child on her lap and explained to him that his mother was too tired to answer his questions.

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"Where is my father, Grandma?" he whispered. "Shan't I see him soon?"

"Very likely," his grandmother said. "Your father is undoubtedly at his club in New York, and when we return to-morrow, we will take you there."

"He went away without kissing me good-bye," the child said, resentment and faith abused, creeping into his tone.

"You were asleep, Joseph; and your mother did not want you to be awakened."

"No, Grandma! I was not!" he protested vigorously. "Father saw me running towards him, and he went and left me. And I hadn't seen him for an awful long time."

The child put his hands to his eyes to conceal the tears that told of disappointment rankling still in his heart.

"You shall see your father just as soon as we get back to New York, which will be to-morrow or the next day, shan't he William?"

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"Surely, Annabell!" the kindly man replied, as he patted the child on his shoulders.

"Oh! I'm going to see Father, Mother!" the child touched his mother's arm, but she had closed her eyes, and had laid her head on her father's breast.

Mrs. Hamilton was asleep when they arrived at the sanatorium, and the strong man carried her in his arms, as if she had been a child,—just as he had carried her hundreds of times when she had been his little girl, his "little jewel" as he was pleased to think of her and call her.

He had always been so very fond of her,—so very proud of her,—his beautiful daughter, from the time that the nurse had placed her in his arms, and told him that his wish had been granted, up to the years when she had become old enough to accompany him in his walks of a Sunday afternoon, dressed in the pretty clothes his wife was so fond of fashioning for her;—and then later when she was of the age to require his escort to the many

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social functions that young people delight in; — how he had enjoyed being her companion through it all, not only her father, but her dear comrade. It all came back to him now, as, following the nurse up the wide stairway, he carried his precious burden into the room assigned her and laid her on the little white bed, where she was to lie for many weeks.

She opened her eyes when he laid her down. "How long have I been here Father?" she asked.

"We have only just come," he said.

The tired woman turned her face away, and again fell asleep. The nurse did not attempt to disturb her, but gently placed the soft coverlet over her, for it was evening, and although mid-summer, the wind was blowing cool from the ocean.

"We'll leave her in your care." Mr. Harland spoke softly so as not to awaken her. "Come, Annabel, we will go now. We can run out from New York every few days and see how she is.

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"Don't spare your attentions, will you?" he said to Miss Lacy, the head-nurse. "She's the only little girl we have."

A tear found its way down the loving father's cheek, for he knew how precious his "little girl" was.

The child seeing the tears in his grandfather's eyes, became suddenly solemn of countenance, feeling the presence of some foreboding ill.

"Grandma!" he whispered, "may I kiss Mother?"

"No, dear! It might awaken her. Take Grandpa's hand, and we'll go now."

The little procession moved slowly down the stairs, leaving the sick woman to that gentlest of all healers, that knitter-up of the raveled sleeve of care, — sleep.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTERVIEW

As soon as Mrs. Harland returned to New York she set about to accomplish two things: one, to look after the welfare of her son-in-law, for whom she had always felt considerable affection, — her motherly heart having a special predilection for boys, — and especially wayward boys, — the other, to call on Mr. Manning and, if possible, to obtain permission for Mrs. Manning to see her little son. She would invite the child to visit Joseph, and would then arrange to have the mother join them at Mrs. Hamilton's.

Mrs. Harland was not one of those universal regulators, — feminine Don Quixotes, who feel called on to set in order such human machinery

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as had got out of gear; but in special instances, where she felt her intercession might work for good, she did not hesitate to lend her services.

In these two instances, coming as they did, in one case so vitally close to her personal interests, — for were not her daughter's and hers identical? — the other concerning one for whom she had had such motherly regard in his early youth, — the man so intimately associated in his college days with her own son, — her only son, who had always been very close to her heart in spite of the material distance that separated them. And so she felt as if it were especially her duty to see what she could do in behalf of the erring wife, — and the child, too, whose appeal to her heart, although she had never seen him, was almost as great as if he had been her own grandson, — little Joseph, — her sense of ownership being as keen as her daughter's. And then there was the big Joseph, who needed the strong arm of protection more than did his son, who,

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though resembling his father, had seemed to inherit through his mother's side, the strength and vigor,—moral and physical,—of his Dutch ancestors,—sturdy of arm and sturdy of purpose. The Hudson River Dutch! It had a good old sound. She liked to feel that she was descended from them, and still farther back from that mighty little people who had wrested their kingdom from the sea.

One had only to live by the sea as she had done all her life, to feel its power and what it meant,—this keeping always at a distance the fierce enemy that could leave such destruction in its track. Yes; an ancestry that had seized its home from a tempestuous, treacherous, storm-blackened deep!—that was an ancestry of which one might be proud, and withal divinely thankful.

And she was thankful that her grandson had sprung from an ancestry whose warm red blood no wintry blast could chill. The blessed child! He did not need her, but

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his father, where was he? she must find him, must save him from himself, and in saving him, also save her daughter; — for that good simple woman, whose ideas of marriage, prescribed as they were by the accident of her own marital happiness, could see in the breaking up of her daughter's home, only ruin and disaster for both husband and wife. She held to the belief that marriage, while founded on utilitarian principles, — she was not orthodox, and so did not look upon it as a divine institution, — was the basis of all the happiness that one could hope to attain in this world. She could not see, by any subtlety of reason, how two persons once married, — and marrying as every true man and woman marry, with the intention of permanently living out their lives together, — could sever their relations without bringing irreparable injury upon themselves and their family.

She could not see why it did not mean moral death, — the same impossibility for survival as

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exists when lightning rends an oak, doing such damage as even nature cannot repair. She thought of the man and wife as forming one life, and she could not see how that life could be rent without bringing extreme disaster to each. And so she felt that, in her daughter's case, it would mean ruin for both her and her husband, moral and physical for the husband; certainly moral, if not physical as well for her daughter. Even now did she not lie ill, so ill she had hardly sufficient strength to raise her hand?

Mrs. Harland could not find her son-in-law at his club. He had been there, she was informed, but had stopped only over night, and had gone away again. He was not at his office either, nor had he been there since his return. The same evening she called at the home of Mr. Manning, but her interview with him was very unsatisfactory. He would not discuss the matter with her, although he expressed pleasure at her call, and asked particularly after her son, whom he had not seen

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in ten years. Discouraged with the failure of her efforts, she returned home to be greeted inquiringly by her grandson, who with his face glued to the window-pane had been momentarily expecting her return.

"Did you find Papa?" he cried as he ran to meet her.

"No, dear; but maybe I shall see him to-morrow."

"Did you see the little boy, Grandma?" his voice quivering with the disappointment her reply had evoked.

"No, dear, he had gone to bed."

Mrs. Harland epitomized in her answer and tone the discouragement that so often awaits endeavor, — even though it be the worthiest. Fortunate, indeed, it is for poor, discouraged, finite creatures, that effort is often so richly rewarded. While the bitterest disappointments are known only to those who strive, on the other hand, only those who strive can know the joy of achievement. That which we fall heir to cannot give the delight which accom-

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panies effort crowned with success, — provided that the reward comes not too late, — while the wine is still on the lip, — the music in the ear.

CHAPTER VIII

A FREE MAN

“When is Mother coming back, Father?”

The little son of John Manning paused on the threshold of his father's study, and asked the question timidly, fully aware of the ban that had been placed on the mentioning of his mother's name.

“What are you doing up at this time of night?” the father answered evasively, but kindly. “Why are you not in bed? It is after eight o'clock.”

“I was in bed;” the child entered the room, gathering courage from the lack of sternness in his father's voice. “I was in bed,” he repeated; “but I couldn't sleep. When will Mother come back, Father? She's been gone

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an awful long time. It's about a hundred years, I guess."

"It's only three months."

"Well; it seems like a hundred years." The child had climbed into his father's lap, and had entwined his arms lovingly around his neck. "I can't go to sleep without Mother," he continued. "She always used to lie down with me. And, Father! I don't like to go to sleep alone. I get frightened. Awful, horrible faces come and look at me in the dark. Mother used to turn the light way—way down low, and then hold me in her arms till I went to sleep. When is she coming back?" the child pleaded.

Mr. Manning buried his face in his hands. "She isn't coming back," he said.

"Never! Never!" the boy became frightened. "Is she dead? O Father! is she dead?" he demanded.

"She is dead to us," he answered, putting the child down abruptly, and walking away to hide his emotion.

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"Did they take her to heaven?" he demanded. "O Father! Is she dead?"

"No; she is not dead."

"Then I'll see her again," the child cried joyfully, clapping his hands. "I'll see her! I'll see her! I'll see my mother again soon!" he said to the maid, who had come in search of him, and also to announce the arrival of Dr. De Marque.

"Take Edwin with you." Mr. Manning hurriedly kissed the child good-night and turned to welcome his physician.

"How are you feeling?" the voice had the optimistic ring which calls for an encouraging report of the patient's condition.

"About the same." Mr. Manning's tone was disappointing.

"You are feeling no better then?"

Dr. De Marque prescribed for the patient, and then recommended a sanatorium; — "the best place in the world for sick nerves, John. If you are not better in a week, I suggest that you go to Ocean View."

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"I shall not be better, Doctor."

The voice was that of a sick man, sick in both body and mind.

"Take a teaspoonful at night just before retiring, and one after each meal. Should you awaken in the night, take another," Dr. De Marque instructed his patient as he handed him the prescription.

"Should I awaken in the night!" Mr. Manning exclaimed dejectedly. "Why, Doctor, I am unable to sleep until morning, and then only for an hour or two."

"If you will take this on going to bed, you will be able to sleep, I think; and if this doesn't help you," he added, "I'll have you see Dr. Demorest. He is a great nerve specialist."

"I've changed physicians twice within a month. You are the third," Mr. Manning answered discouragingly.

"Dr. Demorest will tell you where the trouble lies."

"Good on diagnosis, is he?"

"Why, man! — he'll examine your tears."

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Promising to call again the next day, the doctor took his departure, encountering in the doorway, the stalwart form of Mr. Forsyth, who had come to deliver in person, the papers in the divorce suit, — just decided in Mr. Manning's favor, granting him absolute freedom from any future claims his former wife might make, and also the possession of their only child, Edwin, aged seven.

"Good evening, John. I have brought your papers." Mr. Forsyth touched him gently on the shoulder, by way of calling his friend's attention to his presence.

"Good-evening!" the sick man's voice lacked heartiness of welcome, the lawyer's errand bringing back with disagreeable forcefulness the recent tragedy in his life.

"Here are your papers, John; you're a free man now."

"*'A free man!'* What mockery! No one who has once been married can ever be free. Divorce cannot free those who have once been tied."

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“‘Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder!’ My God! no man *can* put them asunder. It’s beyond the power of God and man.”

“I’ve worked pretty hard to put this case through, maybe I should have gone a little slower,” the lawyer answered.

“I don’t know which tie has made the knot the stronger, the child that lived or the child that died.” Mr. Manning seemed to be oblivious to the presence of the other.

“Hearts are bound together more often by a common sorrow than by happiness!” the sick man added, reflectively. “The child that died looked like me; he was named after me; Edwin looks like his mother; he was named after her,” Mr. Manning continued, lost in the contemplation of his great sorrow;—his broken home, his motherless child, his wife an outcast.

“Yes; the mother’s name is Edwina,” Mr. Forsyth answered, feeling the necessity of mak-

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ing some response. "The little fellow must miss his mother."

"He does! Just before you came in, he was asking for her, and begging to know when she was coming back. I am about as near a wreck as any man can be and live," he added with a groan. "If it weren't for the boy, I should end it right now."

"Oh, you are going to get over this all right; brace up, John. Another year and you will be a new man."

"I shall be dead by that time." Mr. Manning sank into his chair with a heavy groan.

"Come, John; we'll have a game of cards."

"Not to-night, please. I couldn't." The sick man turned his face away to hide the tears that he had vainly tried to force back.

"Hard lines, John," his friend replied, his voice full of sympathy for the heart-broken man. "Can I do anything for you?"

"No; not to-night! If you will excuse me, I think I shall try to get some sleep."

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"I'll drop in to-morrow and see how you are."

"I don't suppose I shall be here. Dr. De Marque has advised a sanatorium for my case, and I think that's where I belong. It's queer when our hearts become sick, our whole machinery gets out of gear."

"You can count on me, John, for anything that it is in my power to do." Mr. Forsyth wrung his hand in sympathy. "Call me up, and I'll come any time you want me," his friend assured him in parting.

Left alone John Manning paced the floor restlessly, going over and over again the same haunting questions that had troubled him for the past three months, ever since the fateful revelation of the tragedy that had wrecked his home.

"It is strange, — this thing, — the human heart," he reflected. "Let it become ill, and our whole system becomes deranged." He looked at himself in the long pier glass opposite, and noted the pale, drawn face, and

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emaciated physique;—he who had been so robust, so abounding in perfect health but a few months previously. It was strange, this treating of the physical for an ailment that traced its causative to the mental. Had he not known of the existence of this evil that had come upon him, he would still be strong and well, enjoying to the full, all that had made life sweet.

His mind reverted to the friend who had opened his eyes to the disaster that had wrecked his home. It was his business partner, Mr. Mosley, who had told him. Would it not have been better had he remained blind? Did he wish that he had? He was too ill now to think. He did not want to think. He wished only to forget; yes, so far as was possible, to put behind him that past, which had once been filled with the priceless treasure of a woman's unsullied love,—the one love that he had ever had, or ever would have. Forget! That was impossible. How could he forget, when this thing was revolving ever in his mind?

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this something that carried him always back to the point whence it started; that would not cease its mad revolutions? No; he never could forget,—never could put this awful thing behind him. It would take more strength than he possessed.

He unlocked a small drawer in his desk, and took from it a pistol. He had purchased it against the time when life might become unendurable,—his burden too heavy. That time seemed at hand. In a flash, he could end all,—all the suffering, this revolving around and around,—this horrible, unendurable thing that would not stop! There was nothing left now to live for! Nothing? He thought of his child, to whom he must needs be both father and mother. He laid the pistol down. He must bear his burden for the sake of his boy.

He must gain strength,—more strength, . longer to bear the burden. He must get back that virility which had marked him among men; a man on whom even strong men leaned.

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Had he not been strong, how could he have withstood the heart-breaking pleadings of his wife for re-instatement in their home? the tears of his child, who had begged him to bring back his mother? No! he could not have stood her implorations for forgiveness had he not possessed the strength inherited from his Puritan ancestors.

His heart had gone out to the unhappy woman in her wretchedness. He had felt, too, the weakening influence of the child's appeal to his love; but he had withstood all,—this overwhelming demand upon his sympathy, and had not yielded. He had disposed of all her personal belongings,—her gowns,—her jewels,—had sold them and had given the proceeds to charity. It had taxed him greatly to do this,—to give to strangers the beautiful gifts that had been his love-tokens on their anniversary days. He had been able to do this, and to put her from him, to pit her lot with a pitiless world.

He did not do this for revenge. He felt

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that it was necessary for her development. His heart had bled for her, but because it had been for her good, he could do it. Then why was he not strong enough now to forget? Why could he not put behind him forever the memory of what had been? Why could he not control this daily, hourly dwelling upon that incontrovertible something which could not be changed one iota by the thinking! He had gone over the situation a thousand times, ten thousand times ten thousand, and it had remained the same. He had always come back to the starting point.

He had analyzed his conduct, and could not see wherein it could be found wanting. He had done his duty as a father and husband. He could not have done differently had he had to begin life anew. But had he not been delinquent somewhere? Had he? Was the whole miserable tragedy to be laid at his wife's door? Was he in no way to blame? Was it all his fault? Had he shown less attention to his business and more to her, could this thing have

A FREE MAN

been averted? He did not see how he could have done differently. He had had large business ventures, involving not only his own interests but those of others, — transactions in which fortunes were at stake.

How could he have known that his absence from home on repeated occasions, — his neglect, frequently, to write and assure his wife of his unbroken faith; his apparent indifference, too, when in her company, — absorbed as he had been in business detail, — how could he know or even guess that his seeming neglect was being misinterpreted, — was being made attributable to other causes, and that her mad jealousy was eventually to result in the destruction of their home, — of everything that each had held most sacred in their life? No; he had never even guessed in those busy days when he was piling up his fortune, and those of others, of the existence of this horrible thing, which was so soon to wreck their lives?

Why hadn't he known? he asked himself. Why hadn't he foreseen the inevitable conse-

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quence that must result from his seeming indifference to her? He recalled now, when it was too late, how he had frequently remained at his club several nights in succession; only, however, because of its convenience, the lateness of the hour precluding his return by train. His wife had said nothing; had not asked for an explanation of his absence at any time, — a circumstance that occasionally impressed him as unusual, but he had attributed her silence to other causes. He had supposed that her home, her child, her social duties had so wholly occupied her thought and attention as to make his presence or absence immaterial, so long as he was engaged, as he had been, in the pursuance of those interests that meant success and happiness to both. And so they had drifted until their boat had struck the rocks, and had been wrecked forever. Nothing could now restore it. The blow had been too heavy.

Thus he reasoned, — always being led back to the place whence he had started. This wheel had made its convolution again, and had come

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back again, — had made its round just as it had done for the millionth time, and would continue to make so long as there was left one spark to start the wheel in action.

He turned down the lights, and passed into the adjoining room, — his study, where he threw himself exhausted on the lounge and sought to forget his grief, for a few hours at least, in the troubled sleep that he hoped would follow.

He had been lying there an hour, possibly longer, when he was disturbed by muffled voices in the adjoining room. He could hear the child's voice chattering in low tones to some one with whom he evidently was on very familiar terms.

The boy had become restless, and entering the library in search of his father, had stood for a moment on the threshold, startled by a presence that was not his father's, but one equally familiar; for there in the center of the room, with the moonlight streaming through the open window upon her, stood his mother,

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with arms outstretched to receive the little figure that was running towards her.

"Mother!" he cried. "O Mother! Hold me tighter, Mother! tighter! tighter!"

Fearful that the sound would awaken the child's father, the mother smothered the little voice with kisses, pressed again and again upon his lips, holding him tightly to her heart, as though she would keep him there forever.

"O Mother! How did you come, Mother? How did you get in?"

The child wound his arms about her neck, and kissed her joyfully, feeling that now he had found his mother, they would never again be parted.

"How did you get in, Mother? through the window?" he asked, as the moonlight, falling upon them, attracted his attention to the long French window, which led to the verandah, and which was now wide open.

"You're not ever going to go away again! Are you, Mother? Mother!" he cried out passionately. "You're never going away again!"

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"Tell me! tell me!" he demanded, sobbing out his grief upon her breast. "Tell me you're going to stay forever, Mother!"

His mother met his pleadings on.y with silent tears and sweet kisses upon his cheeks, his eyes, his lips.

"What are you doing here?"

The stern voice of her husband broke upon the stillness like a death-knell sounding the doom of a sinking ship.

"Why do you enter here like a thief in the night?" he repeated coldly, his attention attracted to the open window.

"I had to see him, John. I couldn't stand it another hour," the woman cried, while the child clung to her in fear. "Oh, I had to see him! Don't send me away! Let me stay just this one night with Edwin! I can't live without him."

"You should have thought of that before. It is too late now."

"I was out of my mind! I thought I had lost your love, John! I have never loved any

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one but you, and when you left me alone night after night, I thought you had learned to care for some one else and — ”

“ And so out of spite, you thought — ”

“ No! No! No! It was not spite. I never thought of revenge. I was simply desperate! I could think of nothing else, — only the love that I thought I had lost, and when, and when, — ”

“ And when some one else offered what you mistook for love, you sold your birthright for a mess of pottage, — just like thousands of women have done before you.”

“ John! John! Don't look at me like that! I can't stand it!” the woman laid her hand upon his arm imploringly, while the child clung to her sobbing as though his heart would break.

“ Let me stay with him to-night, John! I must have him this one night! I must feel his little arms about my neck! John! John! John! Do you hear me?” she cried hysterically. “ I've got to have him! I can't live

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without him! You don't understand! You can't understand," — the woman was almost suffocated with grief, — "how I have suffered! Let me stay to-night, John! I could get along better, if I could have him just this one night."

"O Mother! don't leave me! don't leave me ever again!" the child threw himself into his mother's arms, as she sank on her knees in her prayer for mercy.

Her cry fell on ears deaf to her agonized pleading. Summoning up the strength, which in the past had been his pride, Mr. Manning quickly telephoned the service nearest at hand to send a car at once to his residence. A ring of the bell brought the maid, who having missed her little charge, was about to go in search of him. The cab, too, responded quickly to the call.

"Mother! Mother!" the child screamed as the maid took him from her.

"Edwin! my little Edwin!" the unhappy woman reached out her arms in answer to his cry, while she sank half-fainting to the floor.

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"Your car is at the door!" her husband's voice brought her to her feet.

"Mother! Mother!" the child endeavored to follow her.

"Edwin, — darling! Edwin!" she cried as the door closed upon her.

CHAPTER IX

BY RIGHT OF THE LAW

Six weeks had passed since the arrival of Mrs. Hamilton at the Ocean View Sanatorium, and she had only now been pronounced sufficiently recovered to return to her home. During all this time, she had seen none of the members of her family, the doctor having ordered absolute quiet and rest. Neither had she been permitted to receive messages from them, except such as could be transmitted through her physician. To-day, for the first time since her arrival, a letter had been handed her. It was from Mr. Forsyth, and the first communication of any kind she had received from him, Mrs. Harland having informed him of the serious condition of her daughter, and

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also of the impossibility of reaching her either by personal interview or by letter.

The evening before, unable longer to endure the suspense the long silence had entailed, he had called at the sanatorium; and having been informed of the improvement in Mrs. Hamilton's condition, he decided to write at once and ask permission to call. Now that the opportunity of meeting her again was at hand, he experienced a sense of foreboding ill, not knowing what opposing influences might have been at work during the long separation. As for himself, his feelings had undergone no change, except to become more intensely alive than ever before to the demands of his heart.

Love had tarried long before knocking at his door, for he was now approaching his fortieth year. Gifted with a nature in which the physical and the spiritual balanced equally all the tangent impulses of an imaginative temperament, his heart and head had only now attested to the supremacy of love's claim. In Julia Hamilton, he had found the embodiment

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of his ideal, the one woman in all the world whom he could truly love, and so he had given himself up with all the zeal and fervor that only such a nature can feel, to this one grand passion of his life.

Six weeks of weary waiting for even so much as a glimpse of this divine being! It had been a lifetime to the man who would have waited an eternity rather than bow before other than the true altar of his love. That Mrs. Hamilton legally belonged to another did not affect his sense of ownership. He had early acquired the habit of looking beneath the surface of things, and with this habit, the conservatism that commands judgment to wait on impulse, to withhold her decision until the facts presented could be duly weighed and their face values determined. His code of ethics was no handed-down hearsay, subordinated to expediency and made to cover all the variant phenomena of human conduct.

To his mode of reasoning, Mr. Hamilton had long since forfeited the last vestige of his

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rights. A woman, according to Mr. Forsyth's conception, was nature's masterpiece, and to him, Julia Hamilton epitomized the highest type of human perfection, — the most beautiful flower in this Garden of Eden; furthermore, he had come to look upon this flower as belonging to him, for had he not discovered its rare beauty and sweetness?

In his opinion, no one else, no matter what his claims, had the right to this flower; her husband had seized it only to trample it in the dust. If this is what marriage meant, and to many men, unfortunately, this is what it did mean, then he could not see the efficacy nor the sacredness of the marriage system. The ceremony that bound a woman to a man, he knew, as a lawyer, served a utilitarian purpose, — a provision evolved from human needs; and, when not perverted, making for the protection of the woman and her offspring. If this protection were withdrawn, as it certainly had been in the case of Julia Hamilton, what larger claim was there on her loyalty? It was a poor

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makeshift, this wedded love that would permit a husband and father so grossly to neglect his family, to absent himself, as he had done, for weeks at a time, merely in the pursuit of selfish pleasures. He could not understand this willingness to undergo a separation that was to him torturous.

Six weeks of separation! Mr. Forsyth knew what this meant to one who truly loves. And this was the penalty of his love, — to suffer the torments of Tantalus — and in silence without the right to utter one word of protestation.

And why? Why had he not the right? What evil perversion was this of divine prerogative? What monstrous thing was this sprung from Nature's womb? What was this wrong that had once been right? — the right of man to take unto himself the complement of himself — that other part, whose being, vibrant alike in every chord, should sound with him the height and depth of Heaven, their joyful paeon matching in its divine harmony the majestic music of the spheres.

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Why did he not have the right to this possession? He would have it, he told himself. He clenched his hands tightly, and swore that he would make right what the world deemed wrong. He would have this glorious creature for his own. No perverted man's law should stand in his way. Human-kind would go on till the end of time, he argued, bowing down to graven images, did not a prophet proclaim the falseness of its beliefs? Yes; he would write to her, would see her at once, now that she had recovered. He would appeal to her love; to her intelligence; to her sense of what was rightfully due to her and to him. She would understand, and must respond to his appeal.

Beyond a doubt, no matter what the world's verdict, Julia Hamilton belonged to him, — was his complement, especially ordained by nature to mate with him. Society might sit in judgment, and render a false verdict, as, of course, she undoubtedly would; but then, Society did not know the facts, and so was incompetent to judge.

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Every situation in life, he continued to argue, presents the spectacle of a court-room, — judge, jury, lawyers — the central figure the defendant, who alone knows the facts. In consequence, that august body — judge and jury — which we term Society, is too often apt to render a false verdict, and this through sheer ignorance of the bearings in the case.

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Mrs. Hamilton, lying on the lounge in the spacious library of the sanatorium, read his letter listlessly as first, but as she proceeded, her heart gradually responded to the glowing words; and the passionate, alluring love that had obsessed her whole being, now began to reassert its claims and to demand her of herself. She walked up and down the room excitedly, and began to plan anew the future that should cast their lives together.

During all the weeks of her confinement, she had experienced no sense of privation; no desire to see the man who had filled all her thought in the few months previously. She

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had accused herself of heartlessness, of fickleness, but had finally concluded that her utter disinterestedness was due solely to her physical condition. In fact, she had felt indifferent towards all who were nearest and dearest to her; and what was strangest, she had not even been concerned about her little son, whom she idolized and from whom she had not been separated for even a day since his birth. Towards her husband she had maintained a state of utter unconcern, which had not yet been overcome. He seemed as if dead to her. She had not been surprised at this; but it had surprised her that Mr. Forsyth had shared the same fate. With his letter in her hand, however, and her health again restored, all the past came back, with its appeal to her love, and the desire for the protection and the companionship she had so fatally missed in her married life. She must free herself — be free in the eyes of the world to follow the dictates of her heart.

Why must one always abide by the conventional code, which admits of no exercise of

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individual rights in special cases? Society, had, indeed, a very bad habit of insisting that all its members should be dressed in garments cut after one model, chosen because of its seeming adaptability to all sizes and shapes. In consequence, the misfits were many, making the wearer uncomfortable and ill at ease in the presence of those who, by the mere accident of circumstance and condition, approached more nearly the standardized pattern. Fortunately for the majority, a native adaptableness enabled them at least to appear donned in a habit of suitable style and fit. Even if the habit sit ungracefully, society will not look askance; it asks only that texture, style, and cut shall be the same — its mandate in this respect as incontrovertible as the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

“My Beloved!”

She read her letter slowly, dwelling upon the tender words, that none of their meaning should escape her.

“Oh! this cruel separation! You cannot

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guess what it means to me—the long and dreary weeks,—every minute an hour and every hour an hour of torture. I love you and I am determined to possess you. I cannot live without you. I will not, nor will I consider any one else's rights—your husband's least of all. In fact, he has none. He forfeited them to the last vestige when he deserted you and your child. He is no longer entitled to my consideration nor to yours. He does not love you as I do. No other man could love you as I do. You have never had the protection that you should have had. It is you who have borne the burden. Let me bear it. Dearest!—my love!—my wife—some day.”

Mrs. Hamilton felt her cheeks glow with excitement. Her heart responded to the appeal to rid herself of her present ties, to turn her back on them forever, and to make for herself a new world, where love, not duty, should be her guiding star to happiness.

“My Beloved!” She thought to read the

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precious words again that they might come to her at night, when, lying with closed eyes, she should dream out her future; but, hearing the sound of approaching footsteps, she hastily concealed the letter in her bosom.

It was Mr. Manning who had entered the room. He, too, had sought this mecca for human ills, and his recovery was being accomplished.

Mrs. Hamilton had frequently met Mr. Manning during her stay, but only for a moment, when passing to and from the treatment rooms. The rules of the institution were strict, enforcing absolute quiet and rest until the patient has been pronounced recovered and able to leave its walls.

"I left a book on the table. Were you about to retire?" he questioned.

"Not for a few minutes," she answered, trying hard to conceal the nervousness induced by the letter she had been reading.

"I must show you a photograph of my little

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boy." Mr. Manning took the book, in which it lay, and gazed lovingly at it before handing it to Mrs. Hamilton.

"The darling!" she exclaimed, with much feeling, the mental picture of her own child coming before her. "It makes me homesick for my little Joseph. You must long to be at home again."

"Yes; as you know, there are only two of us now."

"I know." Mrs. Hamilton's voice was full of sympathy, her own troubles forgotten for the moment in the contemplation of the other's sorrow.

"Our home has been so desolate since his mother went wrong." The man bowed his head upon his hands, overcome with the sense of his bereavement.

"But the poor mother!—to be separated from her child!" Mrs. Hamilton's sympathies were more largely with the mother.

"The night before I came here," the man continued with the wretched story, "she got

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into the house at midnight, unknown to the servants, and I found her in the library with the boy."

"And you?" Mrs. Hamilton held her breath.

"I ordered a car and had her leave."

"How could you be so cruel? How awful! Oh, the misery of it all! If you had been the sinner, she would have forgiven you. That is a woman's way, but you have sent her out into the world, homeless, childless, disgraced, ruined."

"It was her own act that separated us. It was she who brought on all this misery. God knows I loved my wife."

"Then why didn't you show it?" Mrs. Hamilton knew well from her own experience how disastrous was the wreckage of a loveless home.

"I did. I gave her a beautiful home, diamonds, everything that heart could wish."

Mrs. Hamilton bowed assentingly.

"Men woo women with passionate words and loving caresses, and then expect to keep them

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by clasping a diamond chain about their necks."

"But I was not that kind of man. If ever a man loved his wife, I loved mine," Mr. Manning insisted.

"You say you loved your wife and yet you have separated her from her boy. What right have you to exert this power? — nothing but the right of brute force, the force that since the world began has crushed the weak and helpless. When a man marries a woman, he promises to love and protect her. Often he withdraws his love and if the wife receives the attentions of a man other than her husband, he revenges his wounded egotism by thrusting her out into the world and taking her child.

"Love!" Mrs. Hamilton had become greatly excited; she seemed to be pleading her own cause. Indeed, unconsciously, this is what she was doing. "You don't know the meaning of the word, — not what it means to a woman. What you mistake for love is love for yourself. If you had truly loved your wife, you would

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have given her the same protection that you would an erring child. You would restore her to her home."

Mr. Manning looked up astonished beyond measure.

"No one has ever talked to me this way. My friends have all commiserated with me. You don't mean that I did not do right when I put her out of my life. God, woman! You don't mean that I should take her back?"

"Certainly I do! No man has a right to separate a mother from her child," Mrs. Hamilton argued. "When a woman brings a child into the world, she pays the price — often with her life. *She pays in full*, — and no man living, — lawyer or layman, judge or juryman has the right to take her child from her!"

Mrs. Hamilton paused, attracted by voices from without. Some one was calling her name. Excusing herself, she hastened to the door, and there met her parents, who had but that moment arrived.

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"Father! Mother!" Mrs. Hamilton cried, overcome with surprise and delight at their unexpected arrival.

"O Julia! you are looking so well," her mother exclaimed, noting the high color in her daughter's cheeks, which were glowing from the excitement of the recent interview with Mr. Manning, and, too, from the unexpected arrival of her parents. "Julia is quite herself again, isn't she William? It has done her a world of good to be here."

"We shall soon have her home again," her husband replied, the cheery ring in his voice telling how happy that home-coming would be.

"Where is Jodie?" Mrs. Hamilton used the pet name by which the boy was often called. "Why didn't you bring him with you?" she asked disappointedly. "I want to see him. I wish you had brought him," she added with a gush of maternal tenderness; for, with the advent of her parents, there returned all the love and tenderness she had previously felt.

"Never mind, Julia!" her father answered

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consolingly. "We are going to take you back with us to-morrow. The doctor says you may return with us if you will promise to obey his instructions."

Mrs. Hamilton embraced her parents excitedly, delighted at the prospect of returning with them.

"I shall be very glad to get back home. I didn't mind the loneliness at first; but after a time it became unbearable."

"It must have been very lonely for Joseph, too." Mrs. Harland could not resist the temptation of saying a word in behalf of her son-in-law.

"Where is he?" the daughter hesitated to inquire, but she knew that the time had come when she could no longer maintain silence. "Do you know where he is?" she repeated.

"He is at his club," Mrs. Harland replied.

"And drinking like a fish." Mr. Harland looked askance at his daughter, doubting the wisdom of acquainting her at this time with her husband's condition.

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"More than ever?" Mrs. Hamilton became excited; two bright spots burned on her cheeks, while she questioned her parents further. Apparently her long spell of indifference had given away to deep concern. "Father! Does he look very ill?"

"Yes," he answered. "I saw him yesterday at the club, and he was in bad shape. Evidently he needs you to brace him up."

Mrs. Hamilton walked restlessly about the room.

"I don't think we should have told her, William." Mrs. Harland spoke in low tones that her daughter might not overhear.

"O Miss Jennings!" Mrs. Hamilton called to one of the nurses as she was passing through the room. "Meet my father and mother, — Mr. and Mrs. Harland. I want them to know how kind you have been to me."

"Evidently, this is the place to get cured." Mr. Harland looked proudly at his daughter, noting the high color of her cheeks and lips. "If ever I have an attack of nervous prostra-

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tion, I shall know where to come," he continued, as he turned to the nurse, adding gratefully, "you certainly have been good to my daughter. What do you say to my coming down with one of those fashionable 'eetises'? How does appendicitis strike you?" he asked smilingly, as if fate might serve him a worse turn than to place him under Miss Jennings's mellifluous care.

"Fortunately, it has never struck me," she answered with lively repartee.

"'Sigh'tis!' William; 'appendisightis.'" Mrs. Harland whispered. She would not brook unnoticed any carelessness in her husband's speech. "You may walk around the grounds and entertain yourself, while I visit with Julia;" adding, "don't be long, as we mustn't keep her up late."

"The patients ought to be in bed, — every one of them this minute," the nurse remonstrated as the door closed on Mrs. Harland and her daughter. "The doctor is away for the night, and I can't do anything with them,"

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she continued, while hilarious laughter from the outer hall made it apparent that her charges were bent on making the most of their opportunity.

"I suppose they're afraid they'll die of stagnation if the doctor doesn't succeed in killing them off," Mr. Harland answered, adding heretically, "maybe if he would leave them like this very often, they would soon get well."

"Everybody here has got a big 'case' on hand," the nurse lowered her voice confidentially;—"a 'crush,'" she added by way of explanation as Mr. Harland's expression became interrogative.

"Present company excepted?" Mr. Harland had the happy faculty of meeting people on their own ground.

"I guess Shakespeare knew what he was talking about when he diagnosed love as a madness," she answered gaily. "Well, this is the place to get cured," adding laughingly, "it's a bit funny though to have your stomach flushed when it's your heart that needs a bath. A little

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cold water wouldn't hurt some of them. It would let down their temperature considerably."

Miss Jennings's volubility increased proportionately to the responsiveness of her listener.

"I guess your doctor knows what he is about when he gets busy with that stomach-pump of his; you know what they say about a man's heart?"

"Located in his stomach every time," she answered promptly; — "that's Miss Hale," she interpolated, to identify one of the patients who had just passed through the room.

"She's in love with the family doctor, and is here to get over it," she explained by way of labelling Miss Hale's particular malady.

"Why doesn't she marry him?" Mr. Harland innocently inquired.

"She can't; he's got a wife and two children."

"While there's Reno, there's hope!" Mr. Harland answered lightly; although in view of his own marital felicity, he was the last person

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in the world who would seriously offer divorce as a panacea for domestic ills.

"Mrs. Brown wants to know whether she can have a sleeping powder," an attendant appeared at the door for instructions.

"Give it to her," the nurse answered with evident annoyance at the interruption.

"And Mr. Joy wants to know whether he can have a cigar," she added. "He says he can't go to sleep without it."

"He's a regular kill-joy! Give it to him! Give those babies what they ask for. A sanatorium seems to take the sand right out of them," she added impatiently. "There's that great big baby on the fourth floor front, — she weighs two hundred pounds if she weighs an ounce, — got to crying this morning because she couldn't have a beefsteak, and for breakfast at that. She eats three square meals a day, and then is always asking the doctor what makes her so fat."

"I suppose he told her food; — well, Annabel." Mrs. Harland and her daughter stood

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by smilingly, having entered unobserved a few moments before and overheard their light talk, — “You see I have been obeying orders during your absence, except that, instead of entertaining myself, Miss Jennings has been doing it for me.”

“Thank you,” Miss Jennings courtesied in acknowledgment of the compliment; “oh! did you get your flowers, Mrs. Hamilton?” reminded suddenly of her remissness. “You were in the treatment-room when they came, and I had them put in a cool place. You must pardon me for forgetting them,” she continued upon Mrs. Hamilton’s answering that she had not received them. “I will have them sent up directly. They are gorgeous,” adding significantly, “it isn’t every woman that has so devoted a husband.”

“That was a nice thing for John to do, wasn’t it, Annabel?” Mr. Harland whispered, mentally registering a wish that the flowers might have a conciliatory effect upon his daughter, making her attitude towards her

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husband less rebellious, and inclining her to regard a reunion with him as not altogether impossible.

"Come, Annabel, we must go, so that Julia can get a good night's rest."

Mr. and Mrs. Harland lingered a few moments, and promising to come in the morning at ten o'clock "sharp," took their departure, not, however, without reminding their daughter that she must retire early so as to be fresh for the journey home.

Left alone, Mrs. Hamilton's thoughts turned to her husband. Had her parents exaggerated the facts? not intentionally, of course, but through their keen interest in his welfare. She felt inclined to think they had, telling herself that things were never quite so bad as they appeared to be.

She seated herself at the piano and proceeded to play some strains from Chopin,—her concern for her husband giving way under the influence of the inspiring music, to elatement at the prospect of so immediate a release from

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her long confinement, — she had not thought her return home so close at hand.

As she continued to play, the notes seemed to echo the pleadings of her own heart, — only in Chopin's case, it was love burned to the last fibre, — its ashes scattered in the dust and stamped upon by the pitiless invoker of its fires.

It was cruel to win love only to betray it. She could not do this, she told herself. She would not, — not though her love be “falsely true.” She would not stamp out the flame that had been kindled by this new love. She would cherish it, — would breathe upon its dying embers, until they should again glow with the white heat of her chastened love. She ran her fingers over the keys, touching them lightly, — dwelling lingeringly on the tender passages, — her heart filled with sympathy, and yet glowing with admiration for the gifted soul that could paint in music the violet flame of an enthralling, hopeless passion.

She rose from the piano and walked over to

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the large, boulder fireplace, where huge oak-logs, half-burnt, emitted a delightful warmth — most welcome, too; for, although still early in September, the air had become damp and chill through incessant rain-falls. She knelt before the blazing flame, and in it saw the symbol of her love.

“Soon the fire will have spent itself,” she mused. “Nothing will be left but ashes. To keep the flame alive, it must be watched by day and night. When once it dies, it dies forever; no power in the universe can revive it.” Kneeling there by the glowing hearth, her body suffused with its warmth, her cheeks reddened by its rosy light, she thought of her love as a vestal fire—a divine flame ever to be kept alive by loving thought and deed. It was the finite seeking through material things the truth of the infinite. In this way does human limitation extend its boundaries, to touch in time, perhaps, the shores of the Eternal.

It is only by establishing the correlation of

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facts that the sum of human understanding can be increased. An isolated fact is of no value. That an apple falls to the ground instead of flying upward becomes significant only when its relation to other facts becomes known; — all knowledge is based on an understanding of related facts.

As Mrs. Hamilton rose from the hearth, she noticed on the table nearby a large box bearing her address. Some one must have entered quietly and placed it there while she was at the piano, abstracted from her surroundings by the music of Chopin. She opened the box excitedly, — no need to glance at the card lying beneath the long green stems of the “American Beauties.” She immediately placed the flowers in one of the large vases from the mantelpiece, filling it first with water from the pitcher at hand. The flowers should not for a moment want attention. They repaid her care by filling the room with fragrance. She bent over them tenderly, lovingly; they seemed almost human in their appeal, — a presence, urging the lover’s

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suit, and asking that a return, at least in part, be made for the faithful love of the giver. She nodded her head encouragingly, as if assenting to their eloquent pleading. She touched her lips to the fragrant petals, each one the silent expression of his love. As she raised her head, she thought she heard her name breathed softly, and turning in the direction of the door, she saw Mr. Forsyth standing before her.

“Julia! My love! My life!” He drew the woman to him. “The weeks have been an eternity!”

“The roses!—they are beautiful!” she exclaimed in acknowledgment of the flowers; “but—oh, you should not have come here!” she protested faintly, her pleasure at seeing him lost for the moment, in contemplating the impropriety of his calling on her.

“How beautiful you are!” he replied evasively, as he noted the slender figure, the fair oval face with its exquisite coloring; the luminous eyes; the full red lips. “You are yourself again! And now that you have recov-

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ered your health, you will soon be ready to return home," he added joyfully.

"I am going to-morrow. Father and Mother are here, and I am going to return with them in the morning."

"Then I can see you often. We must arrange at once, too, for our future. It will seem an eternity before you will belong to me. Now that you are recovered, we must take immediate steps to free you from your present ties. My beloved! Some day, my wife!"

He drew the woman to him, lovingly, caressingly, holding her to his heart as if to bind her to him forever. He kissed her lingeringly, tenderly, adoringly, — his beautiful idol — the only woman that he had ever loved, — consecrating himself to her so long as life should last, — yea — through all the eternal years. Such love as his could not die with the flesh.

A sound of loud disturbance came from the outer hall, — a voice demanding entrance, angry of protestation, — unsteady in its note.

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The door was pushed violently open, and the woman's husband stood before them, bleared of eye, with hair unkempt, and clothes hanging loosely, so emaciated had he become from a protracted spell of drinking.

"Joseph!"

Mrs. Hamilton turned towards him, quivering in every nerve,—overcome by the shock of his sudden entrance and disheveled appearance. She would hardly have recognized him. Her parents had not exaggerated the facts. Tears of pity that she could not restrain blinded her eyes as she seized his arm.

"Joseph!" she cried. "What have you been doing to yourself? How could you wreck your life in this way? Why can't you be a man?"

"I can't, Julia! It is too late," the man answered bitterly. "I could if you would stand by me.—Who are you?" he suddenly demanded, upon seeing Mr. Forsyth. "What are you doing here?"

Mr. Forsyth handed Mr. Hamilton his professional card, and proceeded to leave the room,

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realizing that in remaining he would only add to the embarrassment of the situation. So bidding Mrs. Hamilton good-bye, he regretfully took his departure.

“Attorney-at-Law!” Mr. Hamilton uttered an oath as he read the card. “Well! how soon are you going to get a divorce?” he demanded. “The sooner the better, for this is worse than Hell. And as soon as you get your divorce,” he laughed boisterously, — “that is where I’ll end.”

“Joseph! what do you mean?” Mrs. Hamilton cried in alarm.

“I mean this is the last time I’ll trouble you. I am going now, — and this time, for good! That’s good!” he exclaimed as he slammed the door; “I am going to the Devil!”

As Mr. Hamilton passed into the hall, hurrying by the attendants who were passing through, he halted at the outer door, overcome by a shock that all but sent him headlong down the steps.

“Edwina!” he cried.

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"Mr. Hamilton!"

The woman started back horrified at the discovery of his identity, for she had witnessed through the open door the scene that had just taken place. The tragedy of two homes lay in the disclosure.

"I understand!"

Mrs. Hamilton suddenly appeared before her husband like an avenging nemesis, gasping out her horror that to her husband's defection was attributable the cataclysm in Mrs. Manning's life as well as in her own.

Overcome by the denouement of the situation, Mr. Hamilton remained silent, while his wife heaped bitter denunciations upon him.

"Don't censure him, Mrs. Hamilton; I alone am to blame," the woman pleaded, while her husband begged her to forgive him.

"Forgive!" Mrs. Hamilton repeated. "Will it restore her good name? Will it give her back her child? Will it take away the awful days of torture when her inquisitors racked her on the witness stand? Will it make her forget them?"

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"Forgive me, Julia! You will never again have cause to suffer. I did not realize the enormity of my sin until now. Only forgive me," he pleaded. "I have never loved any one but you. — I was mad to forget you for a moment. — I promise before God! — I swear that I shall never again betray you. — Only trust me and love me again. — I cannot live without your love."

His words fell upon deaf ears. Whatever pity she might have felt was lost in the contemplation of the resulting tragedy.

"This is the end, Joseph; absolutely the end," she answered bitterly, as she turned from him. Her husband looked at the retreating figure of his wife, and rushed from the room.

A moment later, Mr. Manning appeared, missing only by a hair's breadth the scene that had just been enacted.

"How did you learn of my presence here?" he demanded coldly of his wife, who, startled almost into insensibility, remained rooted to the spot.

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"I saw you as I was passing. I am at the hotel nearby, — I have a position there." Mrs. Manning timidly rejoined. "John!" the unhappy woman cried. "I must see Edwin. I can't live without him!"

"You have found that out too late."

"I thought you had ceased to love me, John. You used to leave me alone night after night and week after week with Edwin."

"Well, you had him; wasn't that enough to make you remember your marriage vows?"

"I didn't forget them, John; that wasn't it. I have never loved any one but you. I used to dwell upon your coldness and neglect until it became an awful fearful thing that gripped me so at times, I almost became suffocated with grief. I used to sit and watch for you until I thought I should go mad with waiting. I see now that I was mad when I sacrificed my home, my child, everything I held most dear, simply for the companionship you should have given me; oh, if you had made a mistake, John, I would have forgiven you."

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"You have only yourself to blame," the man reiterated. "You have brought all this trouble on yourself!" he repeated for the hundredth time.

"You were the cause!" she protested, growing more violently excited as her wrongs loomed up before her. "I had no thought for any one but for you. I never loved any one but you. You were my life,—my breath!—my very soul! I had no thought of sin when I turned to another for the companionship you should have given me. And when it wrecked my life, you held me up to the world to be scorned at—and trampled upon!—to be befouled and spat upon!—and you promised to love me and *protect* me!"

"We are simply begging the question. You have ruined your life, and my life, and Edwin's." Mr. Manning turned to leave the room.

"Let me come back and just be a servant in your house,—what I am now," the woman pleaded, as she fell upon her knees before him.

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"Only let me come back, and I'll promise never to cross your path, — nor trouble you if you will only let me come back. I'll promise never even to see you if I can only be with Edwin."

"You have forfeited the right to Edwin. So far as you are concerned, he no longer exists."

The cruel words brought Edwina Manning to her feet, stinging her into a fierce denunciation of a law that gave a mother no redress.

"I have the right!" she answered defiantly. "The right that no man-made law can take from me! — the right that makes me strong enough to defy you, and the fiendish law that has robbed me of my flesh, — the very blood that had run in my veins. And you dare to say that I have no right to Edwin. If a mother has no right to her own flesh and blood, what right has she in all the world? What right has anybody to anything? What right has any one to exist even? If a mother has no right to her own child, — to the very heart of

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her heart's blood, — then there is no right in all the universe! — and there is no justice! — and there is no mercy! — there is nothing! — nothing! — nothing! And we're all a mistake! — a terrible mistake! — and God is a monster! — and Satan rules the world!"

"You are a *fit* mother for my innocent child!" Mr. Manning heartlessly rejoined, as he started for the door, where he was intercepted by Mrs. Hamilton, who had just entered the room, attracted by the piteous cry that the cruel words had evoked.

"Your child!" Mrs. Manning's eyes blazed like a wounded animal at bay. "*Your* child!" she repeated. "I bore him in the agony of travail! — It was *my* eyes that first looked into his. It was *my* lips that first touched his! — It was *my* arms that first enfolded him! — It was *my* glad cry that first reached his ears! — God! the mockery of it all, that a woman can go down to death's door in one mad, — unspeakable, — unconquerable agony, worse than the crucified Christ had suffered, and that a man

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can take her child from her BY RIGHT OF THE LAW! When women make the laws, no man will dare rob her of her child, — NO! NOT IF HER CRIME IS BLACK AS HELL! — *Your* child! — He is MY CHILD! — MINE!”

The sound of a pistol shot from the outer hall, mingled with the frightened screams of the two women, brought the patients from all directions to the scene.

Mrs. Hamilton, her hands on her breast, clutching at the letter hidden there, as if it were in some unaccountable way connected with the tragedy just enacted, fastened her gaze upon the attendant as he uttered the fatal words, —

“It is Mr. Hamilton! He has shot himself.”

“Joseph! Joseph!”

Mrs. Hamilton sank to the floor, her beautiful face distorted beyond recognition; her hands scattering in bits the letter, which she had madly torn from her breast.

CHAPTER X

THE AWAKENING

When Julia Hamilton regained consciousness a few hours later, she experienced a dull sensation of pain. It was as if she had awakened from a terrifying dream, of which she could recall nothing. Only the impression remained, — the feeling that what had seemed to happen had been the most tragical thing that could possibly have happened. She had not yet opened her eyes, but she was sure she was not alone. Yes; she could hear voices whispering in a remote corner of the room. She was glad she had awakened; for had her dream continued another moment, she must have lost her senses, so horrifying had it been. It seemed as if it had lasted many hours, but she

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could recall no part of it. Maybe she would later; but why should she wish to recall it? It was better not to try, for she would then undoubtedly experience again the same frightful sensations. It must be morning now. If she could only open her eyes, she could tell at once by the light or darkness in the room.

Suddenly it occurred to her that she could not recall how she came to be in the room at all and in bed. She thought she could distinguish her mother's voice. It sounded very indistinct, as if far away. Her father seemed to be answering her mother, whispering softly so as not to disturb her. What had happened? What was the matter? Where was she? Could her parents have taken her home with them as they had arranged to do? Maybe she was not in her room after all. She could know in a moment if she would. Slowly she opened her eyes and gazed about her. Yes; she was still at the sanatorium. There were the doctor and the nurse. Why were they there? She was no longer ill. Like a flash it came to her! It was

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no dream, then! God! It was real! The dream was real! real!

Her scream brought her parents to her side. Her tongue clove to her mouth and refused to utter her thoughts. Finally, when her wild, hysterical cries had subsided, when she could gasp his name, her mother told her that her husband was still alive and that there was a chance for his recovery, — slight, but a chance.

“I must go to him.”

She tried to raise herself up. She must go to him; must tell him not to die! Oh, if he died! She buried her face in her hands. The thought was too horrible. But she must face it. If he died, then she had sent him to his death.

“Mother!” she screamed, “save him! Don’t let him die! You can save him, Mother! If he dies, — O Mother! I could have saved him. I had the chance, but I wouldn’t listen to him! Mother! Don’t let him die!”

The unhappy woman moaned and tossed in the agony of contrition. This, then, was the

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Paradise that she had made for herself. She had taken her destiny out of the hands of her Maker and this is what had happened to her.

No! No! She must not talk to herself this way. This was puerile reasoning. She had done nothing wrong. She was blameless. No one should blame himself for anything, nor should he be blamed, no matter what had been done! "Whatever one does," she reasoned, "is consequent upon what has been done before. Step by step we walk out into the great sea. There is no going back. No! Not even if we are engulfed by the merciless waves. Is there no going back?" she questioned;—"If one could realize the danger before it was too late?"

She would not try to think! There was no use in trying. She could not think rationally. Her head seemed afire within and without,—encircled, too, with a band of iron. Yes; that was the matter! and some one was drawing the clamp,—tighter! tighter! tighter!

"Don't!" she screamed. "I can't stand it!

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I have killed him, Mother, I have killed Joseph!"

She had succumbed to the cruel master;—"brain fever," the doctor pronounced it. Body and brain alike were on fire.

For three weeks the fire raged,—torturous, relentless in its ceaseless burning; at the end of which the soul of Julia Hamilton shone forth luminous, tempered with the white heat of the blazing flame,—equipped now to take up the burden that only the strong can know.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARRAIGNMENT

Joseph Hamilton did not die, although his escape from death had been narrow, — the bullet had barely missed his heart. He recovered after a month's confinement at the sanatorium to face life again, but with conditions vastly different from those under which he had sought to leave it; for he was to accompany Mrs. Harland to her home to be nursed back to strength, — moral and physical, by loving hearts and willing hands. Mr. Harland was to take his daughter abroad, the doctor having prescribed an ocean voyage, with three months of travel as necessary to complete her restoration to health.

In the first few days following the all but

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fatal tragedy, the man lying on the bed of pain could dwell only on his physical suffering; but as the pain became less and the weeks passed uninterruptedly save for the visits of the doctor and the nurse, he had ample time to review his past, and to touch the keynote of the cause of all his suffering, — physical and mental.

He could hardly see how he could have reached the point whereby he had sought death as the only relief from his misery. His desperate act had marked the finish of a week of continuous dissipation; but he recalled now that he had reached a point where he had fully determined to go back to his family and to lead a sane and sober life. How, then, had he come to this pass? Gradually it came to him that he had sought his wife; that he had begged for a reconciliation; that she had turned a deaf ear to his pleading, and that afterwards all was blank. It must have been his wife's refusal to listen to his prayer for forgiveness that had induced his mad act. Even when bereft of his senses, he seemed to realize, as he realized now,

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that without the strong, protecting arm of Julia Hamilton, he must needs perish. He turned his face to the wall with a sickening thud at his heart, while the tears escaped from his burning lids.

A giant of physical strength, what was this thing that had levelled him to the plane of the weakest of all weak creatures? He groaned aloud in his agony, and cursed himself for his weakness. There must, of course, be something radically deficient in his makeup, he told himself, to have brought on this moral declination. Step by step he reviewed his life, to find out just what had been amiss, — what was still awry. His past appeared before him like an open book, but withal, disfigured, like his copy-books of early schoolboy days, blotted and blurred on every page, — irregular of line, the handwriting wretchedly unlike the perfect model from which it was to be fashioned. Yes; his life had been till now just like that in its limitations, — in its failure to approach even remotely what it had been intended to be.

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He saw now that he had brought all his trouble on himself, and so had no one to blame but himself. But, undoubtedly, it would all happen again the same way, if the conditions were to be the same; but the conditions could never be the same; of that he felt sure. No; he could never again get so far away from the path of rectitude that he would find himself in a similar situation. He saw it all in a moment of illumination. He had wasted the spring-time of his youth in idleness, — mental suicide; and he had thought to finish his wasted life in the flash of a pistol aimed at his heart.

To realize our limitations and to try to extend their boundaries, is a big step in the line of advancement; a step to be followed by still another step, and still another until, if life could but be sufficiently prolonged, there must come a time when limitation would cease and infinity begin.

An only child of wealthy parents, able to give their son the highest advantages, he was the center, the beginning, and the end of all their

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worldly hopes. Why had he not even in the smallest degree realized their ambitions? They had wished him to become a great physician and surgeon, whose contributions to science would benefit the race. To this end, they had sent him to Harvard, where his native brilliancy of talent had served to win him a degree without the plodding and application necessary to a student less mentally endowed. But the very facility with which he was able to accomplish his tasks was markedly to his ulterior disadvantage; for the hours that he should have spent in application, were given over to those idle pursuits of pleasure which when followed to excess, bring a train of disaster in their path.

Lavishly endowed by nature, his mental brilliancy matching to the full his physical strength, he had indeed been equipped to extract from life its rarest vintage, and in return to share with mankind the fruits of his rich gatherings. But unfortunately, he had never at any time been filled with an overmastering purpose; he lacked the desire for achievement.

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From his earliest days, every wish he had ever expressed, had been granted. Indeed, the very ease with which he was able to acquire whatever he strove to gain, virtually prevented him from rising above mediocrity; for there was lacking that combative influence which to natures such as his, was necessary to a high mental and moral development. Nothing had ever been difficult, nor had ever been made difficult for him to accomplish, and the very facility with which accomplishment was achieved stood between him and success and affected adversely a nature that was inclined to be vacillating, pleasure-loving, and selfish.

As Joseph Hamilton reviewed his life, lying there in the little darkened room, quiet and still,—remote from all the other patients, it gradually became clear to him why his life had been stamped with failure,—bitter, seemingly irrevocable failure. It became clear to him why he had thus far failed to extract from life anything but bitterness. He had been a veritable dullard not to make the discovery

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earlier, he told himself. How could he have been so blind as not to see it before?

Accustomed as he had been from earliest childhood to the smooth voice of adulation, he had not realized till now that his whole life had been warped, — had been spent with hardly one unselfish aim. He could see now that selfishness had been its dominant note; that it had defiled his life and had destroyed his home. He could recall no kindly act of munificence; no lending of willing hands; no reaching out to the helpless; no raising up of the fallen. Because he had more money than he could easily spend upon himself or his family, he had lacked the incentive to earn it. This, in turn, had led to idleness, the root of many ills. He had tried to seek pleasure in selfish pursuits, hunting deer in the season, drinking with dissolute companions, or throwing dice, at his club. It came to him now as a revelation that his life had been worse than wasted: it had been in actuality sinful in its extravagant waste of time and money. He wondered why it had

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never occurred to him before that he was morally responsible for the use of his money. Why had he never been moved by humanitarian impulses? Why had he so thoroughly lived for himself alone? He could see now how the barrier had come between him and his wife. He had thought her to blame wholly for their incompatibility; but he could understand now that, with a woman of her ideals, they must necessarily drift apart. So even his failure as a husband was attributable to the same causes that had marked his inadequateness in every other situation.

Joseph Hamilton realized now the extent of his limitations in every relation that he sustained to others.

Looking back, he saw that his early training had largely been accountable for his inability to realize in any measure the standards that had been set before him. The mind, like the body, cannot grow unless properly nourished; and mentally he had been fed on sweetmeats all his life. He wondered why he had been so

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long blind to his mental and moral defections. He tried to recall in all his past life one redeeming act, one ennobling thought, one unselfish deed. He had not been wholly without ideals. He could remember that when his little son had been placed in his arms, he had inwardly breathed a prayer that the babe should grow up strong in manly virtues, as much unlike himself as it would be possible for him to be. Yes; in that brief moment of illumination, he had sensed his own shortcomings. Why had he not then become concerned with the stern business of life? It was his unwillingness, as far back as he could remember, to assume responsibility of any kind, that had resulted in his undoing.

Was he to go on through the years to come, doomed to eternal failure in every situation in life? It would require some strong combative influence to overcome the many negative qualities in his nature.

Mrs. Harland realized this, and realized it fully; but she felt equal to the task when

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she took the wayward Joseph under her maternal care. The task was not an unwelcome one, for she had a warm place in her heart for her son-in-law; and he returned her love.

Of an affectionate disposition, bestowing on Mrs. Harland the little demonstrations that, since the death of his own mother, he had felt the need of giving, he had completely won her to him and to his cause; so that the good woman was never without friendly excuses for the man whom her daughter had so sharply arraigned as failing utterly in his capacity as a dutiful and loving husband. Mrs. Harland, with a woman's excuses for the weaker factor in the situation, had really felt, — and she may have been right, — that her son-in-law would have been a very good husband, as husbands go, had her daughter been more patient, more attentive to him, and less interested in the demands of a large social acquaintance and in a larger body of helpless people to whom, in her zeal to better their conditions, she had possibly

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given too much of her time and her strength, to say nothing of the help that a free and abundant purse can supply. A woman's duty, Mrs. Harland felt, should be directed primarily towards her own family,—spiritual, moral, and physical; that when a woman undertook the responsibilities of a husband and children, she should make their wants precedent to those of all others. Her daughter, on the other hand, felt that the physical demands of the helpless had a greater claim; that the rich, having munificently been provided for, should devote their surplus wealth and time to the betterment of the conditions of the poor; and so, on many occasions, when Mrs. Hamilton's presence at home would no doubt not infrequently have held her husband within the beaten line of sobriety and manhood, she would be absent, concerned with the needs of that large part of the society known as the "submerged tenth." Again, social demands of an opposite nature had also eaten into a large piece of her domestic pie; and so in her frequent

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absences from home her husband had found an excuse to take himself off to the club to drink and gamble till midnight.

It was a great question, this of meeting worthily the demands imposed upon the rich and beneficently inclined, by modern social conditions. Julia Hamilton, like many another zealot, considered all the members of the human race as belonging to one family; and, as the helpless and suffering in a family composed of related members always maintain priority of claims over those of the rest; so in the large human family, the same priority of claims exists. Her negligence in matters where her husband was immediately concerned had not, until the eventful night of the almost fatal shooting, seemed to her in the least reprehensible. It was only in perspective that she had seen herself at all responsible for his deflection. Concerned as she had been previously to her acquaintance with Mr. Forsyth, with the demands of the poor and neglected, — the *miserables* of the ghetto, — she had been blind

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to the imperative need in her own home of a strong and guiding hand to divert the destroying influences upon a life given up to idleness and the pursuit of selfish pleasures.

And so the two,—husband and wife, who should have been one in heart and soul and mind, looked out on the past, each in silent condemnation of self,—the one realizing for the first time the baneful results of super-centralization in self; the other recognizing that altruism must also include in its benign favor those having immediate claim. Many a truth fails of recognition through mere proximity of vision. To read the book of life, the light must be strong; the eye steady; the range long.

CHAPTER XII

THE LITTLE LOST BOY

“Good evening, Doctor.” Mr. Manning returning home unexpectedly from a business trip was surprised to find his physician seated in the library, and evidently very much perturbed. “Is any one ill?” he inquired anxiously.

“Edwin,” the doctor answered briefly.

“Seriously? — is he dangerously ill?” Mr. Manning repeated solicitously as the doctor hesitated to reply.

“I can’t tell as yet. There is a good deal of grip about, and some scarlet fever. He has considerable fever; — don’t go up now,” he called as Mr. Manning started towards the stairway. The maid is putting him to bed.

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Wait until the nurse arrives from St. Ann's. She should be here now," the doctor added, consulting his watch.

"You don't know what the little fellow means to me." Mr. Manning could not but contemplate what his life would be were the child's illness to prove fatal.

"I can only imagine; the penalty, you see, of being a bachelor," the doctor answered lightly to relieve the tensivity of the situation.

"I have often wondered why you have never married," Mr. Manning ventured tentatively.

"The only woman I have ever loved is beyond my reach."

"It is always the fruit that hangs too high that we hunger for."

"Some one else was tempted by it." Dr. De Marque grasped the hand that was offered him in silent sympathy.

"We were not expecting you back so soon," the doctor abruptly turned the conversation. Neither could afford to look backwards by so much as a glance.

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"I returned earlier than I intended on Edwin's account. I wanted to spend Christmas with him." A groan escaped his lips as he contrasted the night with the "Christmas eve" of a year ago, — the big tree laden with gifts, reaching to the ceiling, — the child so happy with his toys; the mother radiant with the joy that the anniversary always brought. "His mother was with us last Christmas," he added.

Dr. De Marque glanced up fully aware what was passing in the other's mind. "She should be here now," he answered quietly, "and she isn't so far away from your home or your heart either but that she could be got back."

"She has put herself beyond my power to get her back," Mr. Manning answered coldly.

"I am going to tell you something, John." The Doctor spoke impressively, knowing that his words would fall like a thunder-clap on the ears of the listener. "In my opinion, you are the guilty one. It is you who are wholly to blame."

"In what way am I to blame?" Mr. Man-

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ning looked up suddenly in great astonishment.

"Think a moment. Your wife loved you when she married you. I used to pass your home in the evening, and see her meet you with a glad cry of welcome as you entered the door. Why, John, it was a picture for the gods to envy. Later, when the child came, — the one that died, — don't you remember how she would take his little hand in hers when he was old enough to walk, and go out to meet you? I need not remind you. You know how it was." The doctor puffed his cigar slowly while reviewing the past.

"God! I can never forget it."

"You don't want ever to forget it. This is the proof of her love; of her innate purity. It was not she who made the rift within the lute. You let other interests come between yourself and your family. First, your business, then your pleasure became your god. You forgot your wife and child in the mad pursuit of wealth. The destroyer of a man's happiness in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is not a

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worthless interloper, but a thoughtless husband, who sacrifices all that he should hold most precious on the altar of his selfishness. When the blow comes that wrecks his home, he blames the other man, when he himself is the one to blame. No, Manning, you are the guilty one. And if you are the man I think you are, you will take your wife back."

"Take her back!" The sweat stood out in beads upon the man's forehead. "My God! If I only had her back, — back as she was before this awful thing came upon me."

"Take her back as she is!"

"You don't know what you are saying." Mr. Manning looked at his physician as if he thought him bereft of reason. "You don't realize what you are asking me to do. You wouldn't feel this way if it were your wife. It is easy to talk when the wife belongs to another man. You couldn't do what you are asking me to do. You couldn't and you wouldn't. You couldn't forgive."

"I have forgiven," the doctor answered

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quietly; "only the woman was my sweetheart. The world would condemn her, but to me she is a pure woman; society does not take into account the forces of nature. We physicians understand this better. In her case it was a strong maternal instinct that dominated her. After the birth of her child she never again saw the man who caused her downfall. Her sin, if we could call it such, whitened her soul. I could take her to my heart feeling her to be undefiled."

"And you would marry her?" Mr. Manning stared aghast at the man who could so coolly ignore the convention that barred a woman making a misstep from entering matrimony.

"If she would accept me. But she refuses. She admits her love for me, but tells me it is because of its sincerity she cannot bring a shadow into my life."

"A sad story." Mr. Manning paced back and forth contemplating the tragedy that was so like his own in its appeal for sympathy.

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"I think I shall excuse myself. I have other calls to make," the doctor added consulting his watch. "The nurse should be here by this time."

"Can I be of assistance? I have my car outside."

"Yes; you might try St. Ann's again. Ask for Miss Jennings."

The two men had no sooner departed than Mrs. Manning entered, she having come in response to a message from the doctor, telling her that Edwin was ill and that his father was away for the night. Without pausing to lay aside her wraps, she hastily ran up the stairway to the child's bed-room, fearing at every step to be intercepted by one of the servants, and not be permitted to see her child, — in spite of the doctor's instructions that she remain until a nurse should arrive.

She opened the door of the child's room, — the little room from which she had so long been barred, and in which she had spent so many happy hours; — she had been one of the

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old-fashioned mothers, who had crooned her child to sleep at night, with lullabys in his infant days, and later with the stories he so loved to hear. She tiptoed softly to his bedside, and before he knew of her presence, her arms were about him, and her lips were covering his face with sweet kisses.

"Edwin, darling!"

"Mother! Mother!" the child gave a glad cry as he recognized his mother bending over him. **"Have you come to take care of me? Doctor De Marque said he would send a nurse. I am so glad he sent you instead!"** Tears of joy choked the little voice as he entwined his arms about his mother's neck.

"Dr. De Marque telephoned me that you were ill, and that your father was out of town. He asked me to come and stay while he could get a nurse. When were you taken ill, dear?"

"Just this morning; but I am not very ill. I have only a little fever; that's all."

"I should think so!" The mother placed

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her cool hand on the burning forehead, and smoothed back the soft damp curls.

“Read to me, Mother!—just the way you used to do,—before I go to sleep.”

“It might excite you, dear.”

“Read just a little bit. Read out of my new book that you sent me for Christmas. I just love the story of the ‘Little Lame Prince.’” He took the book from under his pillow, and handed it to his mother. “Read just a few pages.”

Mrs. Manning could not resist the child’s pleadings, and so she proceeded to read, but very softly that her voice might soothe him to sleep.

“‘When we see people who are suffering or are unfortunate, we feel sorry for them; but when we see them bravely bearing their sufferings, and making the best of their misfortunes, we have quite a different feeling; we respect,—we admire them. One can admire even a little child.’”

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"The little child is the little lame prince, isn't he?"

"Yes," the mother answered.

"'When Prince Dolor'—"

"That's the little lame prince, isn't it?" the child interrupted.

"Yes. 'When Prince Dolor had patiently untied all the knots, a remarkable thing happened. The cloak began to undo itself.'"

"Read where the little lame prince gets into the magic cloak, and flies over all the houses."

"Here it is," the mother continued the story. "'The minute the window opened, out it sailed—right into the clear, fresh air, with nothing between it and the cloudless blue.'"

"That's the magic cloak with the little lame prince inside, isn't it?"

"Yes, dear. . . . 'Prince Dolor had never felt any such delicious sensation before. I can understand it. Cannot you? Did you ever watch the rooks going home at night, singly or in pairs, oaring their way across the calm evening sky, and think how pleasant it must

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feel to be up there, —quite out of the noise and din of the world, able to hear and see everything, yet troubled by nothing and teased by no-one — all alone, but perfectly content?’ ”

“ Don’t cry, Mother, dear! ” the child interrupted as the mother’s voice became unsteady.

“ ‘ Something like this was the happiness of the little lame prince when he got out of Hopeless Tower, and found himself for the first time in the pure open air, with the sky above him, and the earth below.’ ”

“ I wish I had a magic cloak,” the child said wistfully.

“ What would you do with it, dear? ”

“ I would fly over all the houses until I found where you lived, and then I would come down through the ceiling while you were asleep, and surprise you; and when you waked up in the morning, you would find me — oh! let’s play ‘ Grammar ’ and the ‘ Little Lost Boy.’ ”

“ Now, let’s play ‘ Grammar ’! ”

“ Grammar? ’ ” his mother asked in surprise. “ Did we ever play ‘ Grammar ’? We

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used to think that 'Grammar' was a very hard game when I was a little girl."

"That was in the olden times, wasn't it?"

"It seems like a long—long time ago," the mother answered sadly. "Well, how do you play 'Grammar'?"

"Why, you know, Mother. Don't you remember?" the child asked in surprise. "'Who,'—'Who,' Mother,"—he began, by way of reminding her.

"Oh, yes!" she answered; "only we didn't call it 'Grammar.' *Who* is the dearest little boy in all the world?"

"I!" the child answered quickly, delighted that she had recalled the little game. "Now, 'whom,' Mother," he prompted.

"And, *whom* does Mother love best in all the world?"

"Me!"

"You're a bright little boy!" she exclaimed, kissing him fondly.

"You see, it isn't hard, Mother, dear. When

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you say 'who,' I have only to remember to say 'I.' And when you say 'whom' I have to say 'me.' Now let's play 'The Little Lost Boy'!"

"But you see, dear, you are ill, and so we mustn't play any more games to-night."

"Just this one game, Mother. Let's pretend that the room is dark, — just the way we used to do, — and that you are on the bed beside me. Now, say it — 'Once upon a time I had a little boy' — say it!" he demanded.

"Once I had a little boy" —

"'Once upon a time,' " he corrected.

"'Once upon a time, I had a little boy, and he was the dearest little boy in all the world. He had bright eyes and curly hair — and — one day — I lost him!'"

"No; 'I lost him one day.' Don't cry, Mother, dear. Now you must grab me quick and kiss me hard and say,

"'I have found him! — I have found him!' — O Father!"

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Mr. Manning followed by the nurse had entered the room unnoticed, and had seen the little game so touchingly played.

Mrs. Manning turned her head to hide the tears she could not restrain; and hastily kissing the child, started towards the door.

“Don’t go, Mother! Father, make her stay! Don’t let her go!” he cried, his pleadings mingling with the chimes of St. Marks, ringing out the joyful Christmas anthem:

“Peace on Earth, — Good Will to Men.”

The man bent over the drooping head of the woman he had sworn to love and cherish, until “death do us part,” and there came to him a vision of something mightier than his boasted strength. It was the vision of the Christ standing between the woman who had sinned and the pharisees who would have her stoned.

“I will go now;” the mother’s voice was hardly audible, choked by the tears she could not restrain.

“We were playing so nicely before you came

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in;" the child's lips quivered. " We were playing the ' Little Lost Boy.' "

" Your little boy has been found, Edwina." The man gently removed the mother's wraps, and pressing on her lips the kiss of forgiveness, led her back to the bedside of the sick child.

CHAPTER XIII

GOD'S CHURCH

To be alive and to be spared the cruel relentless torturings of self-condemnation! Julia Hamilton ran up the macadam road leading to the highest cliff at the Point, with a song in her heart and a prayer on her lips, breathed in thankfulness to the Great Unknown, that she was not to be arraigned before the bar of her own accusation, hopeless, never-ending, in its silent persistent inquisition. If Joseph Hamilton had died! She would not permit herself to think further. He had not died, but was now with her mother and little son in New York, and was completely restored to health. She had not seen him, however, since the eventful night when he had so nearly ended his life,

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she having only just returned from a sojourn abroad, where she had gone to forget as far as possible the harrowing events that had almost cost her reason, indeed almost her life as well as her husband's.

Oh, it was good to be alive! to be well once more, to feel her pulses beating riotously in the glad joy of living. She would forget everything, for the time being, but the beauty of the scene before her. It was late in March, and the weather was neither cold nor warm, — one of those clear, sun-bedazzled days that follow quickly on the heels of winter, bringing a prophecy of summer soon to come, yet gloriously suggestive, in its exhilarating breath, of winter's strength-giving blasts.

Nature quickly fills her gaps, — each season offering its special appeal to her lovers, — her varying aspects but different phases of many charms.

It was the Sabbath Day, and as Julia Harnilton passed the first bluff upon which the village church stood, sentinel-like in its command of

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the village below, she could hear the voices of the congregation ascend in songs of praise to the Ruler of all things. What blindness of vision was it that mistook cloistered walls for the Church of God! She looked at the cloudless sky above, the wild breakers below,—“God’s Church is my Church!” she exclaimed; “the sky is its dome! The song of praise is in my heart. It vibrates to the uttermost parts of the universe. Not one joyous note is lost! Its waves return in cycles with the years! each cycle but increases its resonance. It grows louder with the growing years. Praise be to the Powers that brought my soul into being!”

She looked out reverently upon the sea, raising her arms in benediction. Always appealing to her variant moods, it now presented to her exalted state a scene of wildly inspiring grandeur. She gloried in the strength that threw its mad breakers high upon the overtopping cliff, tossing them the while, carelessly, like a child at play.

“The power that is in you is also in me!”

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she cried, exultantly, defiantly, "only in a lesser degree. You are master of your domain; I, of mine. The world, too, is at my feet. It is mine to select the richest of her treasures; it is yours to bear them to me. But I am alive! I breathe. Life runs in my veins. I can think; can feel. Do you hear me?" she cried, while the waves sounded their breakers on the rocks, drowning the loud exultant tones that would meet defiance with defiance. "I can feel!" she repeated. "I can love! Oh, life! it is wonderful! and earth is a Paradise."

Her words brought a vision of her child before her. She recalled how at his birth so keenly had her senses been awakened, so alive had she become to the responsibilities of motherhood, it had seemed for a time that she had been sinful to bring into a sullied world, so pure and white a blossom. With her intelligence, she had reasoned, she should not have added one more soul to those already born. The earth was not, as yet, a fit dwelling place for such as these of whom the Christ had said:

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"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

Julia Hamilton was Pagan, but she acknowledged the Christ as she acknowledged Buddha, Mohammed, and all other bearers of an enlightened teaching. In those early days of her motherhood, she had looked upon the child, sleeping upon her breast, the potentialities of its little life hidden from mortal sight, and she had thought of the endless cycles of time that must evolve before earth could match in innocence, the touch of her baby's hand. She had shuddered when she thought of the possibility of those precious fingers' becoming stained; and had heaped bitter denunciations upon herself for bringing an innocent child into a wicked and damning world. She must have been ill, morbid, she reasoned, carried, as she now felt herself to be, to the highest pinnacle of human exaltation.

The sun enveloped her with its effulgent rays; the air, which had become sharp, bit at her glowing cheeks; the breakers rioted madly

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below, dashing her, the while, with needle-like sprays, which glinted like diamonds, in the shafts of sunlight.

“A boon! a precious boon is life! A gift! It is wonderful to be alive! — it is divine! And man can become divine, even as Christ, and Buddha, and Mohammed, and all holy men who have blazed the trail of light through the darkness. God! He is not without. He is within. He dwells in all that is, — in the innermost and in the outermost. He is in everything that exists,” she repeated, — “everything. Every atom is divine. That part of us which errs, is only holiness blinded for the time by the selfish eyes of the ego. Enough of God exists in everything to become God-like, — no, God, — a part of God Himself, — omniscient, eternal. “The whole secret will be discovered in time,” she exclaimed exultingly. “The finite even now is breaking down its bars. There must come a moment when the last bar will be torn away, and man will stand forth a god.”

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Julia Hamilton believed all that her song of promise sounded. She wondered whether humankind would not awaken more quickly to the truth, — would make longer strides towards the goal of infinitude, — should not all the good people toss their hymn-books to the winds, and turn to Life with its needs for teacher. How much precious time was spent in prayer, when there was *Work* to be done! She had come to see that there were three stages in man's evolution, — the brute, the human, the divine. The science of biology made this manifest. In the brute stage, only the strong had a chance to survive; the weak were left to perish. In the human stage, the strong bear the burden of the weak. In the last stage, ah, what then? Men shall be Gods. Humankind will have given way finally to the sovereignty of the God within, and will have become God-like, — nay, Gods in truth. In the meantime there was work to do. Were all the so-called elect to band together, to work as brothers, there would be no "East Sides," no "Ghettos,"

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no stamping down of other people's rights, no crushing out of little lives and child-bearing mothers.

In truth, humanitarian impulses will outlive creeds; our churches are even now administering to the starved condition of the body, as well as of the spirit.

The God-like uses to which these multitudinous "houses of God" could be put! "Open by day and night," should blazon on their arches, combating the influence of the destructive agents, vice, disease, poverty. What a wasteful and non-economic misuse that closes doors practically for six days of the week, and opens them only on the seventh for people who have little need to enter; none, were they about their Father's business!

A picture in extreme architectural contrasts projected itself upon her mental canvas; a vision of gorgeous splendor limned itself against a background of squalid meanness,—the magnificent "houses of God" silhouetted against a sky that domed alike the miserable

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tenements of the Ghetto. Spire upon spire, rising from pinnacled towers in majestic buttressed Gothic, stood out against line upon line of flat-roofed, naked surfaces. Imposing façades, picturesque by virtue of myriad variations in ornate detail, paralleled themselves with ignoble exteriors, unadorned, — hideous in their row upon row of squalid, unbroken sameness. Blue-arched domes, borrowing their color from the vaulted sky, emphasized the unrivaled ugliness of the blackened, smoke-stained enwallments of the abodes of the miserable tenants, — wretched creatures, who had hoped to find in the “land of the free” an escape from the ills of their native home.

“God! the awfulness of it all!”

The woman, lost in contemplation of the picture, covered her face with her hands and shuddered. She groaned aloud as she recalled her last visit to the Ghetto district, — the stifling air, but one pair of windows in many cases doing service for three times the number of rooms, — sin-breeding, disease-breeding,

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death-breeding, in its poisonous filth; joy-killing in its day-to-day combat with this Hell-born triad.

The swarms of unkempt children, — she could see them as she saw them last, on a fiercely hot day in August, — overspreading the small, stifling rooms, and the narrow, stifling streets, whose one virtue was the narrowness that precluded the transit of any vehicle other than the ever-present push-cart; thus offering a comparatively safe haven for the little lives that congregated there, — or that tumbled there, as the case might be, from crowded doorways, or broken stairways, — sometimes from fire-escapes, whose inviting coolness would never again offer a retreat to the little mangled, sun-scorched bodies, seeking escape from the mad, torturing heat of a Ghetto mid-summer.

“The little children!” she cried. “I must go to them! I have neglected them too long!”

A sudden revulsion of feeling checked her enthusiasm. Was she responsible, she asked

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herself, for those who had no claim on her? What about the large majority of people who went about their daily tasks without questioning their obligations to their fellow men? They might be right, and she, wrong. What were these ill-clad, dwarfed men and women to her? They were not children, — children laughed and played and knew no care. Her child was lulled to sleep at night to the singing of soft melodies, — locked in her arms, with the moon he loved so well shining upon him through screened enclosures. What had she to do with stifled rooms, darkened cellars, reeking with disease-breeding germs? Possibly interference in matters detached from one's needs was not in the scheme of man's evolution. Suppose it had been ordained from the beginning that man was to account to himself alone? What of it? Nietzsche's words, pregnant with wisdom, came to her, — "The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it. The question is, how far is it life-furthering — life-preserving?" This was the gage to determine

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the value of an opinion, — and hence of social codes, their variant standards being set by geographical boundaries, thus accounting for the flexibility in ethical interpretation by different peoples.

Are we to recognize that crime, sickness, poverty, squalor, slavery, furnish the soil for man's development as does the offal for vegetable growth? But why this questioning? "Fitness to survive" could no longer occupy its natural position if mankind was to evolve from the brute stage. We had gone beyond the point where, Spartan like, we could hurl our weaklings into the abyss; in consequence, there remained the obligation of the strong to bear the burden, — to bring into operation activities whereby each could develop the highest of which he was capable, physically, and morally, and spiritually.

"And in the end, things must be as they are, and have always been, — the great things remain for the great; the abysses, for the profound, the delicacies and thrills, for the refined,

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—and to sum up shortly, everything for the rare.” Yes, Nietzsche was right, — these were great truths, — the great things remain for the great; but happily the great, the strong, the wise, can disclose the hiding-places of their greatness, their strength, their wisdom, and step by step can guide others over the path that had led them to the peaks. *The great have not always been great; they have become so.*

Yes; there was work to do, and she must do it; and now that she had recovered her health and mental equilibrium, she felt a sudden influx of renewed strength, — an ability to cope with whatever she should set out to do. Her husband, too, must work with her, and in unselfishly working for others, he would find redemption.

Julia Hamilton held no utopian ideas; she did not expect to revolutionize existing conditions, but she felt that she could help to better them. The same qualities that make for successful generalship in warfare, — where the more the murdered the greater the victory, —

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could be used conversely in rehabilitating the defeated in life's battle. The "hows and the wherefores,"—these had to do merely with detail to be worked out in action. The world would be a Paradise if mankind were but enlightened, where mind and heart alike were educated. Were it not for ignorance and heartlessness, life's purpose would be no riddle. The answer was easy. The reason for being is *being*. The world was asleep,—had not yet awakened. The joy of living was the ultimatum of existence, and only altruism secured for the individual the conditions that make happiness possible.

Selfishness, greed, graft, inhumanity,—this is what was destroying us,—billions of dollars spent yearly in a war upon criminals!—she laughed in ironical bitterness,—this was the policy of our boasted civilization, and only now and then a dissenting voice to preach the doctrine of *prevention*. In our mad fear of pauperizing an already pauperized body; in our selfish pursuit of superculture; in our blind

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obedience to the unwritten law that man shall attend to his own affairs alone, we permit the unborn to awaken in a world of wretchedness and squalor; to follow a path reeking with filth, and slimy with the sweat and blood of the victims that have fallen there, — have died there, with only now and then a rescuing hand.

She experienced a sudden re-birth, — a vision of what can be achieved by one richly endowed spiritually, mentally, and possessed, too, of wealth sufficient to bring into actuality what appeared upon her mental horizon. Why had not the vision appeared before? Why was the voice only now distinguishable, — calling to her, — reaching her ear at last, above the mad Babel of riotous sound; the jargon of polyglot tongue, — this torturous wail from blackened and despairing souls; from parch-bound throats of *miserables*, whose smothered cries fall soundless on ears from long unheeding grown no longer heeding.

Julia Hamilton leaped panther-like up the

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steep cliff. What manner of man was it that first invented the walk? "He must have been ill, and nearing his grave," she mused. The fashion must have been set as was that of high collars to hide the mole in a vain queen's neck. Little children run and leap and dance, and are therefore very healthy and wise. They become ill and unwise, only when interfered with by an ignorant domination which confines them behind closed doors, and feeds them on unhygienic food. It would be farcical to contemplate were it not so hideous in its consequences, — this ignorance which is so generally mistaken for intelligence." As she ran from cliff to cliff, her head kept pace with her feet, leading her from one point of view to a still higher one, until she had gotten beyond the beaten path of common thinking. It was wonderful, she reasoned, that people who consider themselves enlightened, know less when it comes to the care of their bodies than the little feathered folk of the forest. If civilization

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had brought him to his present state of existence, that it would be better to go back to the time of ~~his birth~~ ~~his childhood~~.

She had by this time reached the high boulder where she had sat many an hour during the golden summer days, dreaming out for herself a new happiness that was to envelop her life with the "intelligence of its glory." The wilderness of the sky and the sea was upon her. She peopled them in her imagination with spirits of another world, differing from humankind only in the degree of their development. She felt akin to these. She could talk to them — could reveal her inmost soul. In this intercourse was freedom — detachment — untroubled meditation. Here was the epitome of that universality by which man makes great himself to his brother man. Love, joy, satisfaction — all it was wonderful to be alive! But if only one could forget the ~~conscience and misery~~ that poisoned the lives of ~~men~~ ~~of such fellows~~. For a few ~~years~~ ~~years~~ forget it and be lost to

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everything but the glory of the day and the joy of existence. She raised her arms exultingly, — her head thrown back in the highest exaltation of feeling. Her breath came fast as the meaning of life became sentient. To be, — to act, — to give of the largess of her world to those less fortunate, — that was the highest.

"Julia! Why did you write that cruel letter?"

The sudden appearance of Mr. Forsyth brought Mrs. Hamilton's interrogations to a full stop. She had not seen him until he stood before her.

"Why did you write that letter?" he demanded.

Mrs. Hamilton remained silent, overcome with surprise at seeing him.

"Surely, you do not mean to put me out of your life forever?"

"I must!" she at last found voice to answer.

"Have you forgotten so soon?"

"No! no!" she answered tremulously, "but I have made my decision, and I must stand by

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it. I know now what is best,—where my duty lies.”

“Your duty is to yourself. Don’t make the mistake of thinking that another’s happiness should take precedence over your own. There is no virtue in renunciation when one’s self must be laid on the altar.”

“I used to think as you do,” the woman answered quietly; “but I don’t feel that way now,—life looks different—”

“You shall not make this sacrifice. It is your right to be loved,—loved as I love you, Julia.”

“But there is Joseph,” she answered. “You have forgotten Joseph.”

“You would still have him,” he assured her. “You see,” he argued, “your situation is not like Mrs. Manning’s. The court would rule in your case that Joseph belonged to you.”

“Yes; that is just it.” Mrs. Hamilton broke in quickly. “But don’t you see I should deprive him of his father and my husband of his child.”

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"Joseph is not to be considered, — children so soon forget."

"Joseph loves his father, and his father loves him. If you were to see the two together, you would understand."

"Your husband has forfeited his right to his child."

"No! no!" Mrs. Hamilton contradicted with spirit; "he has not."

"Surely, you know that your husband is no longer entitled to your loyalty." Mr. Forsyth could not believe that Mrs. Hamilton was unaware of her husband's defection.

"I look at the situation very differently from before;" Mrs. Hamilton evaded directly answering his question. "Of course, while I still feel that a mother has prior rights to her child, I have come to recognize the rights of a father as well, and above all, the supreme right of the child to the possession of both parents."

"Then you repudiate your former belief!"

"No! No!" Mrs. Hamilton denied the

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accusation with emphasis. "No; I still feel that only those who love each other are truly wedded, and I believe most emphatically that only those who love each other should marry, but I also believe that the family as an institution must not rest its claims alone on love, which in spite of its vows 'till death do us part,' is subject to change, — this we must concede in the light of human experience. Consequently, the family, if it is to exist at all, must rest upon a stronger postulate than that when love ceases, the marriage should be annulled."

"You would not have the family exist after love has gone out of it. You cannot mean this."

"Yes," she answered quietly but with the assurance born of conviction; "provided harmonious relations can be sustained." She believed discord to be fatal in its disrupting effects. "But where love has once existed, there is always the chance that the divine spark can be again rekindled. At best, we have

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but little knowledge of ourselves, — of what we truly feel. What we often mistake for love is merely its counterfeit. We become obsessed with an emotion only remotely related to real love, which calls for honor, virtue, often sacrifice.”

“You would have the family endure in spite of broken vows!” he protested.

“It must!” she insisted, — convinced of the logic of her reasoning, — if we concede to the priority of parents’ and children’s rights over those of husband and wife. If the family is to survive, it must survive in spite of shifting love. We might as well look at the situation just as it exists.”

“Your conclusion implies forgiveness of the erring, and it is not human to forgive,” he replied; “that belongs to divinity, and we are not divine yet;” adding, “if the weak cannot breast the tide, they must sink. ‘The race is to the swift, Julia.’”

“It is only in the brute stage that the weak are left to perish,” she answered quietly; “in

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the human, the weak become the BURDEN OF THE STRONG."

"Julia!" he exclaimed bitterly, as he tried to argue her from the position she had taken. "What has changed you?" he urged. "You are denying everything you formerly averred, — completely reversing your belief that there is no virtue in renunciation when one's self is to be immolated."

"That was before" — the woman covered her eyes as if to shut out the picture visualized there, — her husband lying prostrate with the wound so near his heart, which the bullet had only barely missed.

"You shall not treat me this way, Julia!" He seized her arm in his firm grasp. "You will keep your promise?"

His arms were about her, and the alchemy of his love distilled itself through her being, making resistance impossible.

"Julia! you will keep your promise?"

"She went this way, Father!"

Once more the little voice broke in upon the

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pair, startling them again into submission,—forcing them to recognize a power mightier even than their love. It was the still small voice that had vibrated on the waves of time through all the centuries that had been, and would still vibrate through all the years to come.

“I cannot live without you, Julia! I need you.”

“Not as they do,” she answered.

The man had but time to breathe her name and turn into the bridle path leading to the hotel, when the two appeared in view.

“Here she is, Father!—O Father!—I found her first! I have found Mother!”

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